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CELTIC BARDS, CHIEFS AND KINGS

BY GEORGE BORROW

EDITED FROM THE MANUSCRIPT
BY HERBERT G. WRIGHT

LONDON
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PREFACE

AMONG all the countries and languages with which George Borrow was acquainted there was perhaps none that interested him more than Wales and its ancient tongue. His impressions of his tours in the Principality he recorded in "Wild Wales"; but in that book he had not room enough for all the information which he had accumulated about the history and literature of Wales. He therefore set himself to give an account of the Welsh writers and historical figures whom he included under the title "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." The book was announced in Borrow's lifetime, but never printed. By a series of fortunate circumstances more fully explained in the Introduction the manuscript was recovered and the work now sees the light.

It takes the reader into regions where most English people, at any rate, have never trodden, and is a monument to Borrow's passion for curious and remote knowledge. On all occasions, whether dealing with old or new matter, Borrow sees things from his own particular angle, and invariably leaves behind the stamp of his racy, forceful personality. To lovers of Borrow this book cannot fail to appeal as a further revelation of a singularly original character.

In transcribing the manuscript I have found it necessary now and then to insert words which had been omitted, but these are indicated by being placed in square brackets. No attempt has been made to

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adjust Borrow's spelling, for this is often erratic, especially when he is dealing with Welsh names of persons and places. This magnificent contempt for accuracy is a feature of Borrow and is therefore left undisguised. I have not sought either to indicate every instance where Borrow's views would no longer be approved by modern scholarship, for to do so would have swollen the book to unwieldy dimensions and involved an intrusion of the editor at the expense of the author.

In conclusion, I would thank most cordially Mrs. C. K. Shorter for her kindness in allowing me to publish this edition, Mr. T. J. Wise for his generosity in permitting me to consult his Borrow manuscripts, and Messrs. Constable for granting the use of matter contained in the Norwich edition of Borrow's works. I am likewise indebted to Sir John Murray for allowing me to take an article of mine in the *Quarterly Review* as the basis of my Introduction.

HERBERT G. WRIGHT.

BANGOR.
May 31*st*, 1928.

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CELTIC BARDS, CHIEFS AND KINGS

INTRODUCTION

Among the works which George Borrow in his lifetime announced as ready for publication was "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." Of this little has hitherto been known, and in its complete form it has not long been identified. Its various chapters, extending to several hundred pages, had been separated and scattered. When the present writer had the privilege of collaborating with the late Mr. C. K. Shorter in the preparation of the Norwich Edition of George Borrow's works, he was enabled to examine the manuscripts in the possession of Mr. T. J. Wise and Mr. Shorter and gradually built up the fragments into an ordered sequence. But at the time of the publication of the Norwich Edition in 1924 the missing work of Borrow had not yet been identified, and consequently these fragments were printed in Vol. XIV as a sort of Appendix to "Wild Wales," under the title, "Griffith ap Nicholas" and "The Welsh Bards." Later, it was realised that with an addition which will be mentioned shortly, it was possible to reconstruct in its entirety, "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings."

In January, 1861, George Borrow contributed to the *Quarterly Review* an article on "The Welsh and their Literature," in the course of which he touched

upon the poet that he admired from his youth until his old age, Dafydd ap Gwilym. Speaking of the bard's burial-place, the famous monastery of Strata Florida in Cardiganshire, he says in a footnote: "Of this celebrated place we are permitted to extract the following account from Mr. Borrow's unpublished work, 'Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings.'" We will not reproduce the extract here, for the reader will find it as the opening of the ninety-first chapter of "Wild Wales." Obviously it cannot have been "Wild Wales" to which Borrow referred in the footnote, for it is altogether different in character from what the title of the unpublished work would imply. However, the same passage occurs in "The Welsh Bards" of the Norwich Edition, and here we certainly have a work, the contents of which correspond exactly to the title of the missing book. A careful comparison of "The Welsh Bards" with the article in the *Quarterly Review* yields some valuable results. In the first place, one observes that the latter is largely composed of extracts from the former. This may perhaps throw light on Dr. Knapp's statement that in preparing his contribution to the *Quarterly Review*, Borrow "revamped an old article he had written in 1830, entitled 'The Welsh and their Literature,'" which, so far as the present writer is able to judge, is entirely misleading. Still more important, however, is the explanation found for the abrupt beginning of "The Welsh Bards," as it is printed in the Norwich Edition. There it opens with the words: "We now proceed to give some account of the poetic literature of the Welsh." Clearly this suggests that something has gone before, but in spite of long searching no other manuscript fragment with the missing portion could be discovered. On turning to the article in the *Quarterly Review*, however

we find the solution to the problem. The same words (with the insignificant substitution of " Cymry " for " Welsh ") occur there, not at the beginning, but some little way on. It seems, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the opening passage of the article is the missing introduction to " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." There is just a possibility that when Borrow wrote the article he detached the first few pages from the other work for this purpose and afterwards omitted to restore them. In any case, with the addition of this introduction to " Griffith ap Nicholas " and " The Welsh Bards," Borrow's missing book is complete.

The date of its composition is a matter of interest. It is manifest that if our assumption is correct, the work must have been written before the publication of the article in January, 1861. Support for this view is found in its relation to " Wild Wales," which, it may be remembered, appeared in 1862. On comparing the two works we are struck by the similarity of many passages, some being almost identical. It would seem that when Borrow in writing " Wild Wales " came to speak of the Welsh bards and their works, or of Welsh chieftains and their doings, he drew freely upon " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings," sometimes merely transcribing long extracts. Striking instances of this are his accounts of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Twm o'r Nant. There are also two allusions to " Wild Wales " in " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings," which suggest that the former was still unprinted. Borrow tells how in October, 1854, he set out from Llangollen with John Jones, his faithful companion on his excursions, and walked to Oswestry with the object of paying a tribute to the memory of Goronwy Owen. In the churchyard they encountered the sexton,

who proved to be the poet's great-grandnephew. Concluding the account of their conversation, Borrow says, " Thereupon the sexton and writer shook hands and—but what more passed between them in the course of discourse will be found related in the writer's book entitled ' Wild Wales.' " In themselves these words might not be convincing; but read in conjunction with another passage they are conclusive. Having referred to Goronwy Owen's church in Anglesey, Borrow adds that " he will here give a short description of it from his book called ' Wild Wales,' which contains amongst other things pilgrimages to the native places or spots of burial of the most illustrious Welsh bards." An allusion to Ellis Wynn affords still more striking proof of our contention; for in this connection Borrow remarks that a translation of that writer's " Sleeping Bard " exists in English, though in manuscript only. Now, Borrow's version of " The Sleeping Bard " was published by John Murray in 1860, and, therefore, " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings " must have been written before that date. On the other hand, Borrow refers to writers and characters figuring in " Lavengro," and in such a manner as to presuppose an intimate acquaintance with that work on the part of the public. Thus Borrow touches on " Peter Williams in ' Lavengro,' the Welsh preacher who entertained the opinion that he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost." Elsewhere he speaks of Andrew Brandram and the Bible Society, which institution was " more feared by Pope and Cardinals, as the Man in Black says in ' Lavengro,' than anything else on earth." And writing on Ellis Wynn, Borrow observes that " he is frequently mentioned in the book ' Lavengro,' a book which every person has read and most people have abused, because it contains

no claptrap, is written in a free and independent style, and above all, because it exposes the miserable rage for gentility so prevalent amongst all classes of the English." The fact that Borrow on several occasions describes incidents of his Welsh tour in 1854, giving the year and month in question, takes us a step further, and lastly, we have the evidence of the paper on which "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings" is written, the watermark showing the year 1857. It is, therefore, legitimate to conclude from the above data that the work was composed between 1857 and 1860, probably after Borrow's second tour in Wales in the former year.

Let us now examine the contents of "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." The introduction to the article in the *Quarterly Review* which, as already explained, we regard as part of the book, attempts to set forth the early history of the Welsh people. It is merely a flimsy web of worthless speculation. But the body of the work, as found in the Norwich Edition, giving as it does an outline of Welsh literature down to the end of the eighteenth century, is of a different character. The outstanding bards, such as Iolo Goch, Dafydd ap Gwilym, Rees Pritchard, Huw Morus, Ellis Wynn, Lewis Morris, and Goronwy Owen, are all dealt with at length. We have also extensive digressions on Owen Glendower, Ryce ap Thomas, Henry VIII, and Griffith ap Nicholas. Lastly, we have a digression on Methodism and its effect on the Welsh interlude, which leads to the interlude-writer, Twm o'r Nant.

The work whose contents we have just outlined is a remarkable contribution to the study of Welsh literature, particularly if the time of its composition is borne in mind. In the middle of the nineteenth century the student of the subject had not the

same facilities as are at our disposal. Much of the information was scattered about in periodicals, some of which were not easy of access. The attempt of Borrow, an Englishman, in these circumstances to give a connected account of Welsh poetry deserves high praise. Naturally his work has its limitations. Modern research would reject some of his material, and in details he sometimes goes wrong. It would, however, be unjust to ignore Borrow's merits. He wrote with knowledge, the result of some thirty years' reading. Learning Welsh from a groom at Norwich, he may have been directed later in his studies by the Welsh bookseller living in Smithfield for whom he made his translation of " The Sleeping Bard " in 1830. At any rate, he went to the originals and obtained his information at first hand. A careful investigation of the sources he used shows how much more at home Borrow was with his theme than his contemporary, Matthew Arnold. We miss the brilliant and unreliable generalisations, it is true ; but we feel that the foundations of " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings " are far more securely laid than those of " The Study of Celtic Literature."

Borrow brought a tremendous enthusiasm to bear on his task. Sometimes, it must be admitted, his zeal outruns his judgment, as when he claims for his favourite Dafydd ap Gwilym that he is Ovid, Horace, Tibullus, Martial, and Tyrtæus all in one. Borrow himself anticipates objections, and explains that before ap Gwilym can ever be appreciated in English he must find a great translator, even as Homer found Pope. A lucky thing for Homer, thinks Borrow, that his name was not David Williams, and that he did not write in Welsh. One need not take this too seriously, for it was never Borrow's way to do or say things by halves, and he is almost equally lavish in

his praise of others among his favourite Welsh poets. Occasionally, moreover, he turns his knowledge of foreign literature to better account than in discussing Dafydd ap Gwilym. Thus, in dealing with Ellis Wynn's "Sleeping Bard" he recalls the "Visions" of Quevedo, finding a similarity to which attention has recently again been drawn. In speaking of the interludes of Twm o'r Nant he introduces a contrast with Calderon and bestows on him the epithet of "the Welsh Calderon," a more suitable title at any rate than what Southey saw on a portrait of Tom in the Strand—"The Welsh Shakespeare." In the main, too, it must be admitted that Borrow's estimate of the relative importance of the Welsh poets is not out of proportion. True, there are some names we might hear less of or dispense with altogether, and others of whom we would fain hear more, but those writers to whom Borrow devotes most space and care are the great bards of Wales. Borrow was, therefore, by no means devoid of taste or judgment; he had at least some sense of discrimination. But he was not a great critic, and at bottom he was more interested in human nature than in æsthetic values. Literature appealed to him in the first place, as he repeatedly shows, as a revelation of the author's character.

Interwoven with Borrow's account of the bards is a good deal of history, that of the Celtic chieftains and kings. When Borrow included these in his book he had in mind Owen Glendower, Griffith ap Nicholas, Ryce ap Thomas, and the two Tudor sovereigns, Henry VII and Henry VIII. Incidentally he drew a striking picture of the intriguing nobles who defeated Richard III and placed Henry VII on the throne and also of Henry VIII's contemporaries, Ferdinand and Isabella, Maximilian, Francis, Wolsey, and the Popes. It need scarcely be said that Borrow

is not a dispassionate historian. On the contrary, he is a keen partisan and paints his characters in the brightest or blackest colours, according to his leanings. His violent dislike of Roman Catholicism led him to sympathise with Henry VIII, who became his hero. He portrays him as an innocent youth protesting first of all to his father against the marriage to his deceased brother's wife, and later to his Privy Council. These protests were overruled by worldly wisdom at the time, but ultimately a healthy revolt against an unnatural marriage ended in the divorce which Borrow regards as justified. Henry was singularly amiable and willing to help his friends; but they exploited his generosity and laughed at him behind his back. It was only through the divorce that Henry's eyes were opened, and then his wrath was terrible. Borrow sees in Henry, not a brutal Bluebeard, but a noble character, transformed by treachery, deceit, and ingratitude into a portent. If he was full-blooded, he was not licentious, and in his early life was not cruel, though Borrow admits that in his closing years he committed acts both bloody and unjust. At any rate, he stood out head and shoulders above the other monarchs at the time, in that he always kept his word.

Borrow not only finds excuses for his hero, but overwhelms his opponents with abuse. Take, for example, what he says of Maximilian:

"O, that Maximilian! the union of the man, the fox and the swine in that being constituted something perfectly astounding! Had the present writer lived in his time, he would rather have gone to look at him than at either Ferdinand or the Pope. . . . O, that Maximilian! The writer as a boy used to stare at his portrait in old Emanuel van Meteren's 'History of the Netherlands' till his eyes were almost starting.

Yes, in his little sleeping-garret by the light of a rushlight, he would stare over the half-human, half-bestial features of that being's portrait in the huge, worm-eaten, oak-bound folio, till his eyes all but started from their sockets."

Of the Emperor Charles V, Borrow also has little good to say, though he does allow him some small meed of praise for his courage and his recognition of the obligation to defend his relations' interests. The very title of Ferdinand and Isabella, "Los Reyes Catholicos," is enough to open the floodgates of Borrow's invective; and when he speaks of the Popes he loses all self-control. In point of fact, by the violence of his diatribes Borrow defeats his own object. He becomes so absorbed in his theme that all sense of balance is destroyed, and the reader yawns over the disproportionate amount of space allotted to these religious feuds in a book entitled "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings."

On the other hand, Borrow's denunciation of Wolsey is more effective because it is less prolonged.

"Now only one word," he says, "on a piece of hypocritical nonsense, which has won for him the sympathy of millions and will doubtless still win him the sympathy and commiseration of more millions still. 'Had I served my God as I have served my King, He would not have deserted me in my grey hairs!' O, thou hoary sinner, thou didst serve thy King exactly as thou didst serve thy God, and on that account thy King deserted thee, even as thy God did! Thy King loaded thee with every kindness, with every favour, made thee a greater man than himself and endeavoured to make thee Pope, that is God-idol on earth, and how didst thou requite him? Didst thou not sell thy kind, confiding, generous master to the Pope, Ferdinand, the man-beast of Austria, and the cold-hearted deceiver

Charles, he who could lead thee by the nose even as thou couldst lead thy master, and all because if he had pleased he could have made thee Pope ? . . . Thy God put all the brains of thy native district into thy head. How didst thou requite Him ? By selling Him, by betraying and disgracing Him, by polluting His temple with thy breath, at the time when the disease of Spain was in thy bones and thy marrow, in thy heart, in thy tongue, in thy liver and thy lung. Truly, thou didst serve thy King even as thou didst serve thy God. O, thou worse than Judas ! Judas ! Judas betrayed his God. Thou didst betray thy God and thy King, nay more, thy friend. But enough of thee, Henry's and England's evil genius."

It is Borrow's admiration for Henry VIII which leads him to criticise Henry VII. He is made responsible for the troubles of his son's reign by his insisting on the marriage with Catherine of Aragon, in order that her dowry should not be lost. Borrow hates a mercenary mind more than anything else, and emphasises this weakness of Henry VII. Did he not allow himself to be bought off by the King of France, and, even on his deathbed, did he not haggle with the monks over the price of the masses to be said for his soul ? Borrow's dislike of Henry VII explains in its turn his sympathy for Richard III. He refuses to believe that the current conception based on Shakespeare's play, or on Colley Cibber's adaptation, is fair or accurate. Shakespeare's source was biased, and Borrow, therefore, rejects as the invention of a partisan the reports of Richard's diabolical countenance and deformed body, and doubts if he was guilty of half the crimes laid to his charge. On the other hand, he admires his dauntless spirit and prowess in battle.

The ultimate explanation of Borrow's attitude towards all these monarchs and statesmen lies, as we

have tried to show, in his anti-Catholic bias. In judging Owen Glendower, Griffith ap Nicholas, and Rycc ap Thomas, he is not fettered in the same way. Consequently, the portraits that he draws of them are among the most lifelike in his gallery of historical characters. One feature appears here and elsewhere, namely, Borrow's belief in the guidance of the Divine hand in history. He sympathises with Glendower rather than with Bolingbroke; but is reconciled to the defeat of the former, because it did not agree with God's designs "to permit Wales to become an independent kingdom, as in such an event she must have existed in continual contention with England, and have crippled the latter, whilst herself bleeding from every pore." Hence Bolingbroke, though "a very bad and unjust man . . . was permitted to do what in the long run promoted the general good." The overthrow of Richard III was also the will of God, for did it not mean the accession of the Tudors, one of whom was to rescue England from Rome and say to the monks: "Go forth, ye lazy crew! Either earn your bread or starve!" This thought returns again and again, always with a Cromwellian ring. George Borrow would not be George Borrow if he were consistent, and so it can occasion no surprise when, in another connection, he doubts whether all is ordered for the best in this world. In the history of the English dynasties and in the Reformation, Borrow is willing to see the finger of God, but not in the unfortunate fate of Goronwy Owen.

If Borrow has his weaknesses as a writer on history, he has also his merits. He has visualised each of his personages as a man of flesh and blood, has formed a clear opinion of his character, and pats him approvingly on the back or administers to him a sound cudgelling, as if he were one of his own kith

and kin. What a contrast between Borrow's Griffith ap Nicholas or Ryce ap Thomas and the pale chieftains of the dry-as-dust chronicle in the "Cambrian Register," where Borrow found them sleeping the sleep of many centuries! He enlivens his narrative by introducing imaginary conversations or correspondence. Griffith ap Nicholas writes to the great feudal lords, his neighbours, about the bickerings of their dependents with his own men. Edward of York sends an appeal for help to Griffith and receives a memorable reply. Ryce debates with his advisers whether he shall join Henry of Richmond or not—all this in the most vivid manner.

The use of the rhetorical question and his love of the dramatic are also marked features of Borrow's work. One sees here, too, that fondness of fighting which Borrow, the son of a soldier, always displayed, whether in his adventures in England and Spain or in his translations of Danish ballads. His pictures of the Battle of the Spurs, of Bosworth Field, and of the struggle at Mortimer's Cross are among the best things he has written. The last of these may be taken as an example:

"The battle begins; first the shouting; flights of arrows and bolts from long-bow and cross-bow; then hotter work, nearer play; clashing of faulchions, cleaving of shields and helmets, blood flowing in torrents, a very deadly fight hand to hand. An hour passes and the Yorkists begin to yield. 'En avant, mes filz!' says the great Earl Owen Tudor, shaking his gauntlet at the flinching foe, and Lewis Glyn Cothi uses brave words. Yes, the Yorkists are beaten; they run, they run, all but one band which presses forward, making seemingly (what madness!) towards the banner of the great Earl. Now, red roses, if you can but make that band run, the day is your own. Aye, but it is no easy thing to make that

band turn round, and see ! the rest of the Yorkists, who were running, are become ashamed and are reforming, behind that band and about its flanks. However, thank God, the leader of the band is struck down by an arrow. Yes, their leader, that rather lusty old fellow with the grey hair and breastplate over a grey cloak, his fall will stop them. Yes, they stop. But see ! the old man sits up on the field and says something to that handsome young man and also to that strong-looking fellow in buckram with a morion, who looks more like the thief than the honest man, but who deals terrible blows.

" There is a deadly shock, but the Lancastrians yield and the banner of the great Earl is taken and the first to lay hands on it is Philip ap Howel of Knockelas, who nevertheless falls, cleft through morion and brain by the great Earl's standard-bearer, whose arm is the next moment hewn off by Thomas ap Griffith the younger, who seizes the standard and retains it ' and at the head of his men pursues the Earl of Pembroke even unto flight.' Yes, the great Earl flies and Lewis Glyn Cothi, seeing his patron flying, does not linger behind but betakes himself to wild Wales, ' sitting,' to use his wonderful expression, ' between the ears of the stag.' And the Lancastrian host flies, leaving, however, thousands of dead on the field and many prisoners, amongst whom is Sir Owen Tudor, the husband of Catherine of France, brother uterine of Henry the Sixth, whose head is almost immediately struck off by order of Edward beneath Mortimer's Cross, for those were not the days of mock humanity, when commanders curried favour with their enemies, binding up their wounds, whilst leaving their own mangled followers to perish on the field."

Whatever the interest of " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings " as a study of Welsh literature and as an example of history brilliantly written from the angle

of a partisan, its greatest value is perhaps as a manifestation of Borrow's personality. It is curious to see how here, as elsewhere, particularly in "Wild Wales," Borrow could never make up his mind whether to consider himself a typical Englishman or a Celt. In the account of his travels through Wales he talks now in the accents of one, now in the accents of the other. He is consistent only in his aggressively superior attitude. The reason for this alternation of two different points of view is to be sought in the fact that Borrow, though born and bred in Norfolk, was of Cornish descent. The latter comes to the fore more than once in "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." With pride he refers to the old mystery plays written in "beautiful Cornish, the speech of the writer's own forefathers," and praises them as equal to the work of Calderon. With equal pride he lingers over the Cornish rebellion against the heavy taxation of Henry VII. A poor but brave and spirited people, they fought on in spite of their inferior numbers and scanty equipment. "The Cornish men never gave over to the last," says the old chronicler whom Borrow quotes. In this connection Borrow is torn between his allegiance to Cornwall and his loyalty to Norfolk. "The Cornish," he says, "are a race partly Celtic, partly Saxon, but more Celtic than Saxon. They are incomparably the strongest men in Britain, they make the best soldiers and perhaps sailors, though it must be admitted that the men of Norfolk, who are of pure Scandinavian blood, all but rival them in battling with the sea and storm." It is this dual strain in Borrow that explains two of the great enthusiasms which filled his life, his zeal for the literature of Scandinavia, especially that of Denmark, and his pursuit of the Celtic tongues.

Even if we had not "Wild Wales," the work we

are now discussing would remain as a monument to Borrow's sympathy with Wales and her people. His literary and historical studies had brought the past of Wales before his eyes, his wanderings had familiarised him with the present. He had an equipment of knowledge and imagination such as few Englishmen have possessed, and yet he was sufficiently independent, sufficiently detached, to see the shortcomings as well as the virtues. Borrow pays tribute repeatedly to the courage and loyalty of the Welsh. He tells of the fierce battle of Stoke with the Irish on one side and the followers of Ryce ap Thomas on the other; for when "Celt meets Celt, then comes the tug of war." He speaks of the Welsh commander, Rhys Gwgan, under Edward III, of the Welsh exploits at Crecy, and of their loyalty to all the English kings who treated them kindly. Of the modern Welsh peasant he has also a good word to say, in particular for his love of learning and literature. The father of Goronwy Owen, poor and humble though he might be, understood the meaning of the word "awen," poetic inspiration, and Borrow wonders what English peasant would have shown the same insight. For the Welsh language, needless to say, Borrow had a singular affection. He loved it for its copiousness, its sonority, and its affinity to Greek and Latin. He had only contempt for the false gentility which discarded its rich tradition, and lamented the lack of a university in Wales to cultivate and cherish it, a defect which has long since been remedied.

For the humble man in Wales and elsewhere Borrow had a great liking. His experiences in tramping the open road had taught him that originality is the monopoly of no class, and that even the most unpromising of companions, if plied with

questions by one so eager in the pursuit of the curious as Borrow, may prove a gold-mine of strange information. In particular his heart warmed to the struggling poetic genius. He followed with the keenest interest the careers of such men as Goronwy Owen and Twm o'r Nant; he partook of their cares and sufferings and raged at their oppressors. Goronwy the poor curate, eking out his existence in a London garret, out of tune with his environment in England, or an exile in America, and Twm o'r Nant making ink from elderberries—how these things moved him! As he entered the church at Oswestry where Goronwy had preached he was seized with agitation. With what veneration he regarded the poet may be seen from his words to the sexton, covered with mould and mire, in whom he had just discovered the great-grand-nephew of Goronwy:

"I wouldn't turn my head to look at a prince, my friend, but I would have come a hundred miles to shake you by the hand. Here's my hand, if you will do me the honour to shake it. Come, never mind the mud and clay. I shall be only too proud to take a little of it off you."

Yet with all this was mingled a large measure of contempt for poets, the instinctive contempt of the man of action for the thinker and dreamer. Whenever he can, Borrow emphasises the other qualities of a man apart from his poetic skill. "Iolo Goch was a great poet," he tells us, "but independent of being a great poet, he was a remarkable man"; while Lewis Morris "was a first-rate mechanic, an expert navigator, a great musician both in theory and practice, and a poet . . . of singular excellence." The poetry comes last, the manly accomplishments first, and that is characteristic of Borrow's attitude.

He speaks even more clearly in referring to Twm o'r Nant, who, with his feats of strength, his handiness and adaptability, his vitality and elasticity of mind in trouble, embodied those Viking virtues that were ever Borrow's ideal. He contrasts him with Goronwy Owen: "How different was Tom's behaviour . . . to that of the Welsh bards in general, always looking for a gift and dearly loving the bread of idleness! How different from that of that beautiful poet Goronwy Owen, who could not live without help and who with his family would have died in starvation in London, had not Lewis Morris got him that same situation in Virginia!" A little earlier he says of Tom:

"He was what the poet very, very seldom is—a man. Poets in general as men are certainly very poor creatures. They are weak, cowardly, and effeminate. Horace, one of their princes, says so. If their verses will not support them, which they very seldom do, they are quite helpless and would starve unless somebody were to take pity upon them, giving them a place, a sinecure, or bed and board, which they are always most happy to accept, for in them there is no independence of spirit, no noble pride, though an enormous deal of vanity. Their Elysium is the table of a great man whom they flatter, who treats them with gentlemanly condescension, and whose wife and daughter pet, flatter, and despise them, taking particular good care never to run away with them. O, poets in general are certainly very poor creatures considered as men, though certainly there have been poets who besides writing verses could play a bold part in the drama of life, could build and sail a ship like Lewis Morris, cleave to the chine like Taillefer at Hastings, hedge, ditch, drive a cart or load a cart like Thomas Edwards, who took much more pride in being considered the first carter in Wales than the best poet."

And who would blame him ? Not George Borrow, at any rate, for " is not one grand deed better than all the singing, harping, and scribbling in the world ? " And with his eye on the Crimean War, Borrow continues : " Would it not have been better for England to have taken Cronstadt or the Redan than to have produced . . . some exceedingly clever book every month ? Woe to the country which has writers to boast of instead of men." Borrow agrees with Dr. Johnson in judging poets by the same standards as other men. He will concede to them no privileged position. Even those poets whom he praises for their manliness may be found wanting in some other respect. Thus, in spite of all his versatility, Lewis Morris does not escape unscathed from the fiery furnace of Borrow's criticism, for is not his poetry sometimes licentious and the language of his writings enough to make a harlot blush ?

The power to play a bold part in the drama of life was the test that Borrow applied to all men, whether writers, soldiers, statesmen, or kings, and it was because such men as Henry VIII and Richard III passed this test that he was more easily reconciled to them. Borrow's ideal man of action was Griffith ap Nicholas. Shrewd and far-sighted, he was able to hold his own against the jealousy and greed of his powerful neighbours, and while supporting his own countrymen and even conniving at their misdeeds contrived to remain on good terms with the Court in London. He was one of those bluff, downright characters that Borrow loved. Once he had pledged himself, he never swerved from the path of loyalty. There was no limit to his aid of those whom he had undertaken to support.

What a contrast was Ryce ap Thomas, the grandson of Griffith ap Nicholas, the embodiment of the

qualities that Borrow most detested! Throughout his life he thought only of himself, and with cold calculation sought out everything which would lead to the attainment of his goal. His courage and perseverance, his caution and sagacity, were remarkable; with the result that his career was uniformly successful and prosperous. At the time of his death he was the most powerful man in Wales, the owner of enormous wealth and vast territories. But he was entirely devoid of generous impulses, and in this Borrow compares him to Wellington, for whom our writer entertained a passionate dislike because of his treatment of his soldiers and his failure to save Ney from the vengeance of the Bourbons. Borrow hated the casuistry by which Ryce broke his oath to Richard III and threw in his lot with Henry of Richmond. He contrasts the caution of Ryce ap Thomas with the blunt recklessness of his grandfather, and asks ironically: "After all, what becometh a young man more than prudence, for has he not many fair years in prospect? The aged can afford to be rash; no fair years can he expect, only a few days, and those clouded." Borrow had no sympathy for the double-dealer who achieves worldly success. That is no doubt why he admired the non-jurors who sacrificed prosperity to carry out the pledge they had taken. Borrow thought ill of the Stuarts, but esteemed the honesty and loyalty of their supporters. In connection with Ryce ap Thomas he says, possibly with an eye to himself:

"Is worldly dignity the greatest good? Millions will say 'No,' though they think that it is, and act in a manner that shows that they think so. There are a few, however, who will say 'No,' who neither think that it is, nor act as if they thought it were; who think that even as far as this life is concerned,

what is called worldly prosperity is not the highest good, and that a person with a noble generous heart, even though buffeted by fortune, may enjoy more pleasure, more delight, than one of the cold-hearted ones most highly favoured by that Goddess."

Borrow concludes by showing how the great Ryce, to whom bards had assured everlasting fame, is now forgotten even in the lands over which he held sway, while the name of the humble vicar, Rees Pritchard, is remembered and honoured.

In " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings " we find yet another successful character for whom Borrow felt dislike, in this case amounting to loathing. This was Douglas, the incumbent of Donnington in Shropshire, where Goronwy Owen acted as curate. Douglas was a Scot, who, coming to England, renounced Presbyterianism and entered the Church of England. He attracted attention by vindicating Milton against the charge of plagiarism which another Scot, Lauder, had brought forward in an attempt to damage the poet's reputation. Douglas was rewarded with the benefice of Donnington, became tutor to the sons of the Earl of Bath, and was made successively Bishop of Carlisle and Bishop of Salisbury. Borrow's grievance against Douglas was that he paid Goronwy Owen a mere pittance for carrying out the double office of clergyman and schoolmaster at Donnington, while he himself basked in affluence in London. Borrow's comment is severe: " ' He vindicated Milton,' was said in his funeral sermon. His proper epitaph seems to be the following: ' Here lies the divine who vindicated the English Milton and starved the Welsh one.' " The nationality of Douglas was probably also responsible in part for Borrow's attitude. He had an inveterate prejudice against the Scots; it was even more deeply ingrained in him than

in Dr. Johnson. Was it the result of some boyish resentment aroused during the stay in Edinburgh described in "Lavengro"? Was it a reflection of his jealousy of Jamieson's translations of Danish ballads, or was it a memory of his disagreement with Lockhart? Doubtless all three factors contributed something to the strength of his sentiment at the time when he wrote "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." At any rate the animus is unmistakable. We see it again when Borrow, writing of the Scottish invasion in 1513, says: "Harry hears that the scoundrel Scotch who, taking a mean advantage of his absence, had invaded his native dominions, had been routed at Flodden by England's yeomen and their king slain."

There was another people against whom Borrow was prejudiced—the Americans. One wonders again what was the cause. Perhaps the old parish clerk mentioned in "Lavengro," who had fought at Bunker's Hill, had a hand in it; but it was Borrow's own soldier-father who was mainly responsible. Passages will be found in "Lavengro" to illustrate this side of Borrow, and those familiar with "Wild Wales" may recall the scene with the Welsh-American in the inn at Bala. In "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings" Borrow's bias appears when he speaks of Goronwy Owen's emigration to Virginia, and the long silence which followed. Borrow would have us believe that the poet, coming from the old country, was an object of suspicion, and that his correspondence was opened and destroyed. He gloats over the disappointment of the Yankee on finding the letters written in an unintelligible language—Welsh.

Among Borrow's prejudices we must reckon his hatred of Roman Catholicism. We have already seen how this coloured his outlook. His bitterness was such that he lost all sense of proportion and

could see no good whatsoever in the religion of Rome. This applied equally to the past and the present; his only solution was the root-and-branch policy. He dismissed all monks as equally lazy, and all Popes as equally wicked. His indignation at the subjection of moral law to political aims knew no bounds, while Mariolatry roused him to fury. How typical is his exclamation of fierce joy when he tells of England's separation from Rome: "Aye, mourn in the dust, old strumpet!" It can serve no useful purpose to linger over Borrow's violent and unmeasured sayings in this connection, but it is necessary to mention them when attempting a characterisation of Borrow as revealed by his work. They do show, also, that whatever may be thought of his opinions, he had the courage to say what was in his mind, and that the agent of the Bible Society, with all his bellicose temper and militant methods, sincerely held the convictions that he professed.

Borrow also held strong views about Methodism, and if we had only "Wild Wales" to guide us, we might think him incurably prejudiced in this matter too. Does he not on one occasion remark, on seeing a chapel close by an oatfield: "Oats and Methodism! What better symbols of poverty and meanness!" One remembers likewise the persecuted Anglican cat at Llangollen and many other incidents. Even in "Wild Wales," however, Borrow pays tribute to Methodism in the person of John Jones the weaver, his trusty companion. But for a full exposition of Borrow's views we must turn to "Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings." He paints a vivid picture of the decay of religion in England and Wales before the appearance of Whitfield, Wesley, Howel Harris, and Daniel Rowlands. There was a general lack of vitality, too many dull sermons from the pulpit, and too much

snoring in the pews. Borrow condemns the short-sightedness which drove pious men out of the fold, and contrasts the superior wisdom of Rome in dealing with men like Francis Xavier and Loyola. He points out the beneficial reaction of Methodism on the Church of England and shows how it paved the way for such institutions as the Bible Society. But then he criticises it :

" It is possible for well-intentioned people to go too far and to be over-zealous. It is a capital thing to put down Sabbath-breaking, but it is not a capital thing to turn it into a day of gloom, of sighing and groaning and sour-face-making. It is a capital thing to check profane and obscene language and barbarous exhibitions such as bull-baiting, cock-fighting and the like, but it is not a capital thing to persuade people that a merry and jocund laugh is sinful, and that racing, wrestling, cudgel-playing, and using one's fists occasionally will hurl people down to the nethermost pit. It is a capital thing to teach people to read the Bible, but it is not a capital thing to make them believe that all reading but Bible-reading is to be avoided."

Like Ellis Wynn, Borrow was firmly attached to the Church of England. He loved it because it was equidistant from Rome and Geneva, and he claimed that of all Churches it was the best adapted to promote the glory of God. Borrow shook his head over the laxness of the clergy and the coarseness of the laity in the eighteenth century ; but in some ways he thought more of the Church then than in his own time. It seemed to him to possess more of the true Christian spirit and less of what was anathema to Borrow—snobbishness. Goronwy Owen, the curate of Oswestry, was not ashamed to welcome his poor brother Owen when he arrived hot and dusty after

tramping it all the way from Anglesey; he did not hesitate to obtain for him the post of parish clerk, anything but a dignified employment, and was not embarrassed by Owen's presence in this capacity when he himself was officiating. What is more, the congregation saw no cause for scandal in such an arrangement. One can well understand how repugnant all false gentility was to Borrow the vagabond, friend of the gypsies, and lover of the open road, and how the conduct of Goronwy would appeal to him. For similar reasons he praises Lewis Morris, who in his youth was apprenticed to a cooper and rose to be a landed proprietor and inspector of the royal domains and mines in Wales. Yet Morris never denied his humble origin, and only a few years before his death made a puncheon to commemorate his apprenticeship.

We have earlier remarked on similarities between Borrow and Dr. Johnson, and may add one more—the possession of a robust common sense. Borrow tells how Morfudd eloped with Dafydd ap Gwilym because she found life dull with her old husband, and remarks magisterially that she could have found plenty to occupy her, "had she done her duty by endeavouring to make the poor man comfortable, and by visiting the sick and needy around her." Beside this we may place another aphorism, "A man is never thoroughly well off till he has a good wife; never thoroughly ruined till he has a bad one." Borrow relates a story about Lord Whitney, who being sent with a royal commission to arrest Griffith ap Nicholas, had his commission stolen, and was compelled to don Griffith's livery and justify him in London. However, Borrow refuses to believe it.

"That a gentleman, to say nothing of a nobleman, would, for the sake of life, have consented to do

anything of the kind is impossible. What would life have been worth after submitting to such ignominy ? O, no ! Had Griffith said ' I'll hang you, unless you put on my coat and justify me,' his lordship would have assuredly answered, ' Hang me and be ——,' and had the Welshman ordered him to be executed would have calmly submitted to his fate."

He is equally sceptical about the superb festivals given by Ryce of Tywyn, and laughs to scorn the innumerable hosts of guests equal to those of Asia, the twice twenty thousand beeves and deer, the world of bread and the ocean of wine with which, according to the bard Dafydd Nanmor, they were regaled. But, Borrow goes on :

" We have no doubt that he entertained now and then a thousand people, in a mighty booth, with a superabundance of roasted beef, mutton, and seethed kid, a tolerable quantity of barley bread and griddled oat-cake, with cyder and metheglyn *ad libitum*, and that whatever wine or white bread was at table he kept in his own immediate neighbourhood for his own use and that of a few select friends, amongst whom was perhaps the bard."

Another shrewd remark occurs in the account of Borrow's conversation with the descendant of Goronwy Owen, the sexton at Oswestry. On hearing that the sexton's son had emigrated to America in the hope of making his fortune, but, having been unsuccessful, was hunting after Goronwy Owen's estates, Borrow says : " He who can't make a fortune by a trade in America will hardly make one by a pedigree."

From what has been said it will be seen that though in " Celtic Bards, Chiefs and Kings " Borrow, the lover of the open road, is less to the fore than in many of his other works, there are compensations.

We have admirable illustrations of his powers as a writer, many passages being as graphic, vivid, and vigorous as the best of his writings ; we see, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else, his erudition and his indefatigability in the quest of curious information, and, lastly, the work adds much to our knowledge of that singular agglomeration of imagination, sympathy, generous impulse, violent prejudice, and shrewd mother-wit—George Borrow.

CHAPTER I

THE Welsh style themselves Cymry or Cumry, a word which, in their language, means a number of people associated together.* They were the second mass of population which moved from Asia into Europe. They followed and pushed forward the Gael or Gauls; were themselves impelled onward by the Teutons, who were followed by the Slowaks or Sclavonians, who were themselves hunted, goaded, and pestered by a wild, waspish race of people, whom, for want of a better name, we will call Tatars or Tartars. The Cymry have left their name behind them in various regions far eastward of the one where they now sojourn. The most easterly countries which still bear their name, or modifications thereof, are Cambia, "which is two dayes journy from the head of the great river Bruapo," and the Cryme or Crimea. In those parts, and "where Constantinople now is," they tarried a considerable time, and increased and multiplied marvellously; and it was whilst tarrying in those regions, which they called collectively Gwlad yr Haf, or the summer country, that an extraordinary man was born amongst them, who was called by Greeks and Romans, hundreds of years after his death, Hesus, but whom the Cymry called, and still do call, Hu or Hee, with the surname of Cadarn, or the Mighty. This Hu or Hesus taught

* It is but right to state that the learned are divided with respect to the meaning of "Cumro," and that many believe it to denote *an original inhabitant.*

his countrymen the use of the plough, and to a certain extent civilised them. Finding eventually that the summer country was becoming over-populated, he placed himself at the head of a vast multitude and set off towards the west. Hu and his people fought or negotiated their way through various countries possessed by the Gael, till they came to the shore of the sea which separates the great isle of the west from the continent. Hearing that it was only thinly peopled they determined to pass over to it; and put their determination into execution, crossing "the hazy sea," at present termed the German Ocean, in boats made of wicker work and skins, similar to but larger than the coracles which the Cymry always carried with them in their long expeditions.

This great island was called Alban, Albyn, or Albion. Alban is a Gaelic or Gaulic word, signifying properly a hill-region. It is to be found under various modifications in different parts of the world, but only where the Gaulic race have at some time sojourned. The word "Afghan" is merely a modification of Alban, or Alpan; so is Armenia; so is Alp; so is, of course, Albania. The term was given to the island simply because the cliffs which fronted the continent, where the sea between the two lands was narrowest, were very high and towering. The island at the time of the arrival of the Cymry had, as has already been intimated, a scanty population. This population consisted of Gael or Gauls, a people of cognate race to the Cymry, and speaking a language much the same as theirs, differing from it, however, in some respects. Hu and his people took possession of the best parts of the island, either driving the few Gael to other districts or admitting them to their confederacy. As the country was in a very wild

state, much overgrown with forests in which bears and wolves wandered, and abounding with deep stagnant pools, which were the haunts of the avanc or crocodile, Hu forthwith set about clearing it of some of its horrors, and making it more fit to be the abiding place of civilised beings. He made his people cut down woods and forests, and destroy, as far as was possible, wild beasts and crocodiles. He himself went to a gloomy pool, the haunt of the king of the efync, baited a huge hook attached to a cable, flung it into the pool, and when the monster had gorged the snare drew him out by means of certain gigantic oxen,* which he had tamed to the plough, and burnt his horrid, wet, scaly carcass on a fire. He then caused enclosures to be made, fields to be ploughed and sown, pleasant wooden houses to be built, bees to be sheltered and encouraged, and schools to be erected where song and music were taught. O, a truly great man was Hu Gadarn! Though a warrior, he preferred the sickle and pruning-hook to the sword, and the sound of the song and lute to the hoarse blast of the buffalo's horn:

> "The mighty Hu with mead would pay
> The bard for his melodious lay;
> The Emperor of land and sea
> And of all living things was he." †

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* Ychen banog: humped or hunched oxen, probably buffaloes. Banog is derived from ban—a prominence, protuberance, or peak.

† Above we have given what we believe to be a plain and fair history of Hu Gadarn; but it is necessary to state, that after his death he was deified, and was confounded with the Creator, the vivifying power and the sun, and mixed up with all kinds of myths and legends. Many of the professedly Christian Welsh bards when speaking of the Deity have called Him Hu, and ascribed to the Creator the actions of the creature. Their doing so, however, can cause us but little surprise when we reflect that the bards down to a very late period cherished a great many druidical and heathen notions, and frequently comported themselves in a manner more becoming heathens than Christian men. Of the confounding of what is heavenly with what is earthly we have a remarkable instance in the ode of Iolo Goch to the ploughman, four lines of which

For many years after the death of Hu the Cymry retrograded instead of advancing in civilisation; they ceased to be a united people; plunder and devastation were of daily occurrence among them; every one did as he pleased, as far as in his power lay; there was no law, but the law of the strongest; and no justice, save that which was obtained from clemency and courtesy. At length one Prydain arose, who, either from ambition or a nobler motive, determined to introduce a system of government amongst them. By strength of arm and character he induced the Cymry of the lower country to acknowledge him for their head, and to obey certain laws which he enacted for the regulation of conduct. But neither his sovereignty nor his laws were regarded by the Cymry of the hilly regions. Prydain was the first king amongst the Cymry; and from his time the island was called Britain, which is a modification of his

slightly modified, we have given above. In that ode the ploughman is confounded with the Eternal, and the plough with the rainbow:

"The Mighty Hu who reigns for ever,
Of mead and song to men the giver,
The emperor of land and sea
And of all things which living be,
Did hold a plough with his good hand,
Soon as the deluge left the land,
To show to men, both strong and weak,
The haughty hearted and the meek—
There is no trade the heaven below
So noble as to guide the plough."

To the Deity under the name of Hu there are some fine lines by one Rhys, a Welsh bard of the time of Queen Elizabeth, though they are perhaps more applicable to the Universal Pan or Nature than to the God of the Christians:

"If with small things we Hu compare,
No smaller thing than Hu is there,
Yet greatest of the great is He,
Our Lord, our God of Mystery;
How swift he moves! a lucid ray,
A sunbeam wafts him on his way:
He's great on land, and great on ocean,
Of one more great I have no notion;
I dread lest I should underrate
This being, infinitely great."

name, and the inhabitants Britons. The independent Cymry, however, disdained to call themselves or their districts after him, but still styled themselves Cymry, and their districts Cumrie-land and Cumberland; whilst the Gael of the North, who never submitted to his sway, and who knew little about him, still called themselves Gael, and their country Caledon and Alban.

Various kings succeeded Prydain, during whose reigns the Britons continued in much the same state as that in which he had left them; on the coming of one Dyfnwal Moelmud, however, to the throne, a mighty improvement was effected in their condition. This prince was the great lawgiver of the Britons, and the greatest benefactor which the race had known since the days of Hu Gadarn. Tradition differs as to his exact origin, but there is ground for believing that he was the chief of a Cornish tribe, and that he was elected to the throne on account of his wisdom and virtue. He gave a regular system of laws and a constitution to the kingdom, and appointed magistrates in every place, whose duty it was to administer justice without respect of persons in all disputes, and whenever the law had been violated. This great and good man is believed to have lived about 400 years before the Christian era.

After the Cymric or British race had been established in the island about 1300 years, they were invaded by the Romans, under Julius Cæsar. The king, who at that time ruled in Britain, was called Caswallon; he was a great warrior and much beloved by his subjects. In him and his Britons the Romans found their match and more, for after a month's hard fighting and skirmishing, they were compelled to betake themselves to Gaul, the country from which they had come.

Mighty was the triumph in Britain, says an old chronicler, on the retreat of the redoubted foe; and Caswallon gave a grand festival at Caer Lud, or London, which was reckoned in after times one of the three grand festivals of Britain. A grand festival indeed it must have been, if, as an ancient bard says,

> "Full twenty thousand beeves and deer
> Were slain to find the guests with cheer."

Britain was not subdued by the Romans till the time of Claudius Cæsar. When conquered it was still permitted to possess a king of its own, on condition that he should acknowledge the authority of Rome, and pay tribute to her. The first king in the world to confess the faith of Christ was a British king, tributary to Rome. This king, whose name was Lles ap Coel, made his confession as early as the year 160. The Christian faith is supposed by some to have been first preached in Britain by Joseph of Arimathea; by others, by St. Paul himself. After remaining several centuries under the sway of Rome, the Britons again became independent, the Roman legions being withdrawn from the island for the defence of their own country, threatened by barbarian hordes. They did not, however, enjoy their independence long; a ferocious race, of mysterious origin, whom they called Gwyddelian Fichti, invaded them, and filled their country with horror and devastation. Unable to offer any effectual opposition to these invaders, they called to their assistance, from the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Elbe, the Saxons or *men of the knives*, a bold and adventurous, but treacherous and bloody people, who at first fought stoutly for them, but soon turned against them, and eventually all but extirpated them from Southern Britain:

"A serpent that coils,
And with fury boils,
From Germany coming with arm'd wings spread,
Shall subdue and shall enthral
The broad Britain all
From the Lochlin ocean to Severn's bed;

"And British men
Shall be captives then
To strangers from Saxonia's strand;
They shall praise their God, and hold
Their language, as of old,
But except wild Wales they shall lose their land." *

TALIESIN.

Yes; the Cymric or British race were dispossessed of Britain with the exception of that part which they still emphatically call Cumrie, but which by other people is called Wales. There they remained independent for a long time, governed by their own princes; and there, though now under the sway of England, they still preserve their venerable language, the oldest in the world, with perhaps the exception of the Gaulic or Irish, with which it is closely connected. "Wales" is not a Cymric but a Saxon or Teutonic word, bestowed on the land of the Cymry by the seed of Hengist. Like the Gaelic word "Alban," it means a hilly or mountainous region, and is connected with wall, wold, and wood. The Germans, from very early times, have called the Cymry Welsh or Waldenses, and the country where they happened to be, Welschland. They still apply to Italy the name of Welschland, a name bestowed upon it by their ancestors, because it was originally principally peopled by the Cymry, whom the Germans called Welsh from the circumstance of their inhabiting some mountainous or forest country in the far East, when they first came in contact with them.

* The poetical translations in this notice are taken from Borrow's "Songs of Europe."

CHAPTER II

We now proceed to give some account of the poetic literature of the Welsh. We commence from a very early period, quoting from a Welsh triad: "These are the three artificers of poetry and record amongst the nation of the Cymry: Gwyddon Ganhebon, who first in the world invented vocal song, and Hu the Mighty, who first invented the means of recording and preserving vocal song; and Lydain the father of the Muse, who first gave rules to vocal song and a system to recording, and from what these three men effected bards and bardism are derived, the dignities and customs pertaining to them were arranged systematically by the three original bards who were Plenydd, Alon, and Gwbon." So here we have an account of the manner in which bardism originated, which account no one at the present day can confute or is bound to believe. The dignities spoken of in the triad [refer] to the three orders, termed respectively Bardd, Ovydd, and Derwydd, or Poet, Philosopher, and Druid, which constituted what was called Barddas or bardism. The motto of this institution was "y gwir yn erbyn y byd," or "the truth against the world," from which it would appear that bardism was instituted for the purpose of propagating truth. Bardism, or, as it is generally, though improperly, styled, Druidism, was the fount of instruction, moral and religious, in Britain and in Gaul. The vehicle by which instruction, or, as it was properly termed,

truth, was propagated was poetry. The bard wrought the philosophy of the ovydd into song, and the druid or instructor, who was also minister of such religion as the Celts and Cymry professed, whatever that was, communicated to his pupils orally the result of the labours of the bardd and ovydd. The druidical verses then probably constituted the most ancient poetry of Britain, and it is the opinion of those who are best versed in the subject that the ancient strains, which the Welsh term *pennillion yr eiry mynydd*, or the stanzas of the snow of the mountain, are either druidical strains or imitations of them. These pennillion are composed in a measure called Englyn Meilwr; the stanza is of three lines with one common rhyme; the entire pith of the stanza, however, lies in the third line, the first two lines being composed of unconnected expressions, the first line invariably commencing with *Eiry mynydd*, snow of the mountain, whence the stanza has its name. For example:

"THE MOUNTAIN SNOW

"The mountain snow: the stag doth fly,
The wind about the roofs doth sigh.
Love cannot in concealment lie.

"The mountain snow: the grove is dark,
The raven black; the hound doth bark,
God keep you from all evil work.

"The mountain snow: the crust is sound;
The wind doth twist the reeds around.
Where ignorance is, no grace is found." *

In the above specimen of perhaps the oldest poetry which exists in the Welsh language the reader will observe that rhyme is used. It would be rash to assert that the Welsh were the inventors of rhyme,

* A blank has been left in the MS. This poem is inserted from another of Borrow's MSS.—[ED.]

because in some of the oldest preserved poems of the Arabians rhyme is to be found, but there are grounds for believing that to the Welsh the other European nations are indebted for rhyme; and here it will be necessary to say something on the system of rhyme the strange construction of which constitutes its most curious feature. In Welsh poetry rhyme is found in a two-fold shape. There is alliteration, that is, rhyme produced by certain letters following each other at certain distances in the body of the line, then there is the full or common rhyme caused by two or more lines terminating in the same letters; moreover, in passages in which battles are described and in which it is desirable that the sound should in some degree correspond with the sense, words are made to clash like swords in the midst of lines. Examples of the three-fold rhyme will be found in the two lines which follow:

> "Oedd balch gwalch golchiad ei lain
> Oedd beilch gweilch gweled ei werin."

Here there is the three-fold rhyme. We have first the alliteration of *lch* in the first line:

> "ba*lch* gwa*lch* golchiad,"

and of the *w* in the second:

> "*g*weilch *g*weled *w*erin."

Secondly, we have the rhymes of *balch* and *gwalch*, and, thirdly, the rhyming at the lines' ends.

So much for rhyme; and now a few words with respect to Welsh poetical measures. In the *cerdd dafod*, or local song of the Welsh, there are three primary measures, entitled respectively, *englyn*, *cywydd*, and *awdl*. Of the englyn there are five kinds, of the cywydd four, and of the awdl fifteen.

Each particular species of englyn, cywydd, and awdl has its appropriate name, which it is needless to give here. These three primary metres and their modifications make together twenty-four measures which embrace the whole system of Welsh versification, in which, as somebody has observed, each line, word, and letter are so harmonised by consonancy, chained so accurately, woven so closely and correctly, that it is impossible to extract one word or even letter without causing a hideous gap. Whoever ventures to compose out of these measures since the time of their establishment has ever been considered by the Welsh scholar as unworthy of the name of poet.

The earliest Cymric or Welsh poet after the days of Gwyddon Ganhebon and the other personages mentioned with him in the triad is Merddin Bardd Emrys Wledig, or Merddin, bard of Prince Emrys. He flourished about the middle of the fifth century, the period when the Saxons arrived in Britain under the command of Hengist and Horsa. He is said to have been skilled in mathematics and to have been the erector of Stonehenge. He has been surnamed Ambrosius, which is the modification of the name of his patron Emrys. He is the Merddin, or Merlin, who has had to father so many of the prophecies which since his death have at different periods been produced. None of his poetical compositions are extant. The reader will find a more particular account of this bard in Owen's "Cambrian Biography."

During the period which elapsed between the first coming of the Saxons to Britain and the expulsion of the British from the southern and eastern parts of the island, the four most celebrated bards flourished that have ever written in the Cimbric tongue. We allude to Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and

Merddin. Their names are known beyond the region where the Welsh language prevails. It is true their foreign celebrity dates not from a very ancient period, and they are rather indebted for it to the circumstance of their compositions being able to elucidate dark portions of English history than to any particular poetic merit. The quotations made by Sharon Turner from the works of this batch of poets first made their names known to the literary world and excited an interest with respect to them, which interest was subsequently much increased by the vindication of the learned historian of the genuineness of their asserted remains, certain critics in wanton ignorance having presumed to question their authenticity. As in Turner's " Saxon History " and in his " Vindication " copious specimens of the poetry of these four bards are given, together with English translations, and as the entire works of perhaps the greatest of them, Llywarch Hên, have been published and translated by the learned and ingenious William Owen, and as their lives will be found in the " Cambrian Biography," the present writer will say less about them and their compositions than he otherwise should have done. Aneurin of the Golden Word, son of Caw, or, as he is generally termed, Aneurin of the Flowing Muse, was a chief of the Ottadinian Britons, and his chief work is the poem styled " Gododin," a word which probably means that which relates to the Ottadini. This poem, besides being descriptive of the battle of Cattraeth, fought between the Britons and the Saxons, contains lamentations over the British heroes who fell therein. Aneurin himself bore a part in this combat, in which the Britons were so totally defeated that he himself with two others alone escaped with their lives. In his poem he imputes the defeat of his countrymen to

the plight in which they took the field, being partly drunken with mead. The poem is composed in lines remarkably short, consisting in general of only six syllables. It is, upon the whole, rather obscure; but in perusing it one cannot fail to perceive that it contains many "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." Aneurin was a contemporary and friend of Taliesin Ben Beirdd, or Taliesin, Chief of Bards.

Taliesin was a foundling, discovered in his infancy lying in a coracle, on a salmon-weir, in the domain of Elphin, a prince of North Wales, who became his patron. He is said to have studied under Catwg, celebrated for his aphorisms, who kept a school of philosophy at Llanreithin in Glamorgan. During his life Taliesin arrogated to himself a supernatural descent and understanding, and for at least a thousand years after his death he was regarded by the descendants of the ancient Britons as a prophet or something more. The poems which he produced procured for him the title of "Bardic King." They display great power of versification and much that is vigorous and original, but are disfigured by mysticism and extravagant metaphor. The following are his best pieces. First, a consolation addressed to Elphin his patron when in confinement. Second, his "Awdl," disfigured with foreign and cabalistic words, which contains an abridgment of the history of the world, and concludes with a prophecy with regard to the destiny of the ancient Britons containing a stanza as sublime as it is true:

> "Their Lord they shall praise,
> Their language they shall keep,
> Their land they shall lose
> Except wild Wales."

Third, his "Hanes" or History, in which he gives an account of himself, stating amongst other things

that he had known a previous state of existence, had seen Lucifer and his host driven out of Heaven, had witnessed the creation of Adam, and had sat in a chair of little rest over the zodiac. This is the most singular and mystical of all Taliesin's poems. The portion of it which deserves most attention is perhaps where he says he got the *Awen* or poetical inspiration from the seething pot of Ceridwen. In connection with this stanza there is a legend to the effect that when a child he was employed by a witch of the name of Ceridwen to watch her cauldron whilst boiling, and that whilst he was sitting near it, the broth which it contained caught fire, and some drops of it flying into his mouth, he instantly became endowed with the poetic gift. Here there is something which puts us in mind of what happened to Sigurd Fafnisbani and Finn Mac Coul, who, from sucking their thumbs, burnt whilst superintending culinary operations, became possessed of wisdom, witch-craft, and the knowledge of the language of birds. The writer in his essay on Irish literature has said that he believes that the legend about Finn and his thumb is derived immediately from the northern one. With respect to the Welsh legend he has no doubt that though connected with both it is derived from neither, but is a vitiated version of some very ancient myth, to which the northern legend perhaps of all versions extant approaches most nearly in form. Drops from the witch's cauldron flying into the mouth is a modern, vulgar idea, compared with that of burning the finger by touching the roasting, frothing heart of the serpent. The serpent was the earliest object of fear and worship; and all tales of enchantment in which the serpent figures have an origin of great antiquity indeed.

Merddyn Wyllt, or Merddin the Wild, lived in the

sixth century and was a Briton of that part which is at present called the Scottish border. He was a celebrated poet, and many of his pieces, on moral and historical subjects, have been preserved. He was afflicted by a lunacy, and his poems were composed in his lucid intervals. His disorder was occasioned by remorse for having slain the son of his sister. After this act of homicide he principally lived in a forest in Scotland called Celydon, and from his sylvan life was styled " The Wild."

Llywarch Hên, or Llywarch the Aged, was born about the commencement of the sixth and died in the middle of the seventh century, having attained to the prodigious age of one hundred and forty or fifty years, which is perhaps the lot of about forty individuals in the course of a millennium. There can be little doubt that Llywarch Hên underwent more misfortunes than any one of the human race before his time or subsequent to it up to the present period. He was one of the princes of the Cumbrian Britons, but Cumbria was invaded by the Saxons and a scene of horrid war ensued. Llywarch and his twenty-four sons placed themselves at the head of their forces, and in conjunction with the other Cumbrian princes made a brave but fruitless opposition to the invaders. Most of his sons were slain, and he himself with the remainder sought shelter in Powys in the hall of Cynddylan its prince. But the Saxon bills and bows found their way to Powys too. Cynddylan was slain and with him the last of the sons of Llywarch, who, reft of his protector, retired to a hut by the side of the water of Bala, a beautiful and romantic lake, the southern end of which is overlooked by the great mountain of Arran, which after Snowdon is the highest in all Wales. Here he lived the life of a recluse and composed elegies on his sons and slaughtered

friends and on his old age, all of which abound with so much simplicity and pathos, that the heart must be hard indeed that can read them unmoved. Whilst a prince he was revered for wisdom and equity, and he is said in one of the historical triads to have been one of the three consulting warriors of the court of Arthur.

CHAPTER III

HAVING just had occasion to mention Arthur we shall take the present opportunity of saying a few words concerning that personage, the idol of the romancists of the Middle Ages. In the Welsh chronicle of Tysilio he is stated to have been the son of Uthr Pendragon, who died from drinking of the waters of a fountain which had been poisoned by the Saxons, and after the death of his father, having assumed the crown of Britain, to have vanquished the Saxons in twelve engagements and to have died in A.D. 543. The Saxon Chronicle, however, never once mentions his name, and, though it has every appearance of giving a correct narration of the events which occurred during the period in which he is reported to have flourished, namely, from A.D. 511 to 543, speaks of no portentous British hero who was the terror of the Saxon bands and of no bloody defeats sustained by them. Now it is utterly inconceivable, if Arthur had been any such a personage as he is represented in the British history, that the Saxon Chronicle could have passed him by, which is perhaps the most plain, matter-of-fact history which was ever composed. It may be urged that national vanity may have induced the writers of the Saxon Chronicle—for the work was composed by various hands—to make no mention of the dreadful scourge of their countrymen, but in no part of the Saxon Chronicle is the slightest trace of national

vanity to be perceived. All the successes of the Danes and Normans, the real scourgers of the Saxons, are told plainly and distinctly enough and without doubt just as they happened. In a word, the writers of the Chronicle appear never to have heard of any such king as Arthur, like Bede, the grand Church historian of the Saxons, who lived before the earliest writers of the Chronicle, who never once mentions Arthur, though his book treats of sundry matters besides those connected with the Church. The following question is now to be put. Is the ancient British Arthur a phantom or a reality ? The answer is ready : neither one nor the other, but something between both. A huge and brightly shining bubble has been blown out of a drop of soap and water. A petty British prince, who fought some skirmishes with various success with the Saxon invaders, has been magnified into a sovereign, superior in military prowess to Alexander. It is true Llywarch Hên calls him an emperor :

> " 'Twas in Shiphaven Arthur fell,
> To handle steel the brave love well,
> An emperor most redoubtable."

But it was customary for bards amongst the ancient Britons to call people emperors who had very slight claims to such titles. There was scarcely a petty king of Wales who was not called an emperor by his bard. The last person who assumed the title of King of Wales, Owen Glendower, was called an emperor by his bard at the very time that he was a homeless, persecuted fugitive :

> " Through the wild waste to Dublin town
> Shall speed an emperor of renown."
>
> Iolo Goch.

So Arthur's being styled an emperor by Llywarch is by no means a proof that he was an emperor even of Britain, to say nothing of France and Norway, though by romancists he has been made emperor of the three realms. We repeat that he was not the man which the Welsh chroniclers and ballad-poets represent him. Had he been so, Bede and the Saxon chroniclers would have mentioned him, and Llywarch himself would have said something more satisfactory about him than that he was an emperor and was slain at Llongborth, or, as we have rendered it in English, Shiphaven.

If we are asked by what means Arthur became so celebrated as to form the nucleus of a splendid cycle of romance, we say by the exaggeration, or rather inflation, of certain facts by bards and minstrels of successive centuries. There can be no doubt that there was a small foundation of truth to what has been said of Arthur. He was a chivalrous person, that is, he was a good horseman, and attacked the Saxons at the head of armed men on horseback; but neither he nor his followers accomplished deeds at all equal to those which have been attributed to them. Long after his death, however, when only vague traditions remained about him and his knights, and after the Saxons had obtained possession of almost all the southern part of Britain, bards and minstrels made use of those traditions as fitting subjects for poetry, expanding them and decking them with fanciful and fairy-like colouring and making Arthur and his knights appear more illustrious people by a hundred-fold than they ever were, flattering the pride of their brother-Britons, who at last firmly believed in their poetical accounts, which became materials for British history, so called. But however renowned Arthur might have become in particular parts of Britain, it is hardly to be supposed that Arthur would have

attained much celebrity in continental Europe but for one circumstance, the close and continual intercourse of the Armoricans and the Cornuwallians or Cornish. There is every reason for supposing that Arthur was a Cornish prince, and that his stronghold was Tintagell or, as it should be written, Ty yn y Tagell (the house in the gill of the hill). The Cornish have ever glorified Arthur, and the ballads of their minstrels about him and his knights were speedily caught up by the Armoricans, who spoke a Cimbric dialect strikingly similar to the Cornish. Minstrels of Armorica refashioned them, added to them, embellished them. Their versions, some of which exist at the present day, were speedily translated into or imitated in Norman and Provençal, which languages were not slow in making Arthur and his chivalry known to the whole world.

One circumstance connected with the romances about Arthur and his chivalry should here be noticed, which is that in whatever language they appear the names of the heroes are strictly Cimbric or British. This fact goes some way to prove not only the British origin of the romances, but that there is something real in them. We are decidedly of opinion that most of the names which figure with that of the ancient British prince in song belonged to warriors who actually rode in his troop. All the names of these ancient British warriors may be translated by a tolerably good British scholar. Arthur means bear of steel; Trystan, rueful look. Lancelot, the name of the pink of Arthur's knights, is local and originally belongedto some parish, Llangeli, Llaneli, or Llansilien. It is curious enough that the British Arthur, of whom very little is known, is surrounded in the ballads and legends about him by knights bearing names such as the followers of a British monarch might be expected

to bear, whereas the French Charlemagne, of whom much is known by authentic history, is surrounded in the chivalrous strains of France, Provence, and Spain with peers bearing names which it is next to impossible the peers of the Emperor of France and Rome should have borne, being neither Latin nor Frankish, but with few exceptions Danish and Norwegian.

The romances which remain concerning Arthur in the Welsh language, whether in poetry or prose, probably constitute a very slight portion of those which were composed concerning him. In the popular tales of the Welsh called the " Mabinogion " an Arthur frequently occurs, but whether he is the same person as the Arthur of chivalry it is difficult to say. Arthur in those singular tales is a wonderful personage enough, but does not shine as a chivalrous monarch, as he invariably does in the poems relating to him. The most remarkable poems about him are those to be found in the first volume of the " Archaiology of Wales." They are three in number and are written in the *Englyn Meilwr*, the most ancient of the Welsh measures. All three are in the shape of dialogue. The first is a dialogue between Arthur and Gwenivar, the lady so famous in the Anglo-Norman ballads for her beauty and inconstancy; it seems to have occurred before their marriage. The second is between Trystan, son of Tallwch, and Gwalchmai, son of Gwyar. Trystan having taken offence from some cause had quitted the palace of Arthur and been absent for three years, and on Arthur's sending twenty-eight of his warriors to make him prisoner and bring him before him, had overthrown them all one after the other, but Gwalchmai of the Golden Tongue soon persuaded him to return. The third is between Arthur and his nephew Liwlod, who had been changed into an eagle. And now to other matters.

CHAPTER IV

After the Saxons had obtained possession of what is now called England, Wales remained for many centuries independent and was governed by its native princes. At first the whole country was governed by one prince, but Rodri the Great, who commenced his reign in the year 843, divided Wales amongst his three sons. To one he gave Gwynedd, or North Wales, to another the land of Powys, and to the third the Deheubarth or southern part. The residence of the prince of Gwynedd was at Aberfraw in Môn, or Anglesey; that of the prince of Powys at Math yr afail; and the chief residence of the prince of South Wales at Castle Dinefwr on the bank of the Towy. This division of Wales was eventually very prejudicial to its interests. The petty princes speedily quarrelled with each other and their dissensions were craftily fostered by the Saxons, and subsequently by the Normans, who frequently assisted one prince against another, glad to see the Welsh bathing their swords in the blood of their brethren and diminishing the number of the natural guardians of their country.

All the Welsh princes patronised song. The one amongst them perhaps who rendered the greatest service to poetry and to its kindred art, music, was Grufudd ab Cynan, prince of Gwynedd, of whose life, the early part of which was a series of perilous adventures, there is a most entertaining history in Welsh in the first volume of the "Archaiology of

Wales." Anxious that poetry and music should not be degraded by falling into the hands of the profligate and uneducated, he published a statute by which it was enacted, first, that none should practise those arts, or reap the emoluments arising from practising them, save those who should be admitted at *eisteddfodau* or poetical sessions, one of which was to be held every three years; second, that none could be admitted at those sessions save those for whom the poets and harpers under whom they had studied would vouch that they were competent persons to be permitted to practise their respective arts; third, that no person should be held competent to practise both arts, that the bard should compose poetry but not play on the harp or crowd, and that the harper or crowdist should play on their instruments without presuming to compose poetry. The *eisteddfodau* were instituted chiefly in the hope of producing excellence in poetry by encouraging competition. The following translation of a statute of Grufudd ab Cynan concerning the management of one will afford the reader a correct idea of their nature :

"STATUTE OF GRUFUDD AB CYNAN CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF AN EISTEDDFOD

"When the assembly shall have met in consequence of a summons or proclamation at some appointed town or city, they shall in the first place select twelve men versed in the Cimbric tongue and also in poetry, bardism, and heraldry, if such can be found, to sit as judges, which men shall deliver a theme, which shall be sung in *englynion unadl union*, *cywydd*, or any of the four-and-twenty measures, but not in *derry*, *carol*, or any vulgar metre, which the head bards of old did not deign to take any notice of, because there are no rules pertaining to them. The

judges are to forbid the candidates singing satires or making lampoons upon each other, and are to allot to each candidate an adequate time for the composition of his *englyn, cywydd,* or whatever other name his poem may bear. The jury shall receive the names of whatever bards may be present with an intent to display their poetical talent, in order that each may be called to the chair in his turn to recite his composition. The bards who shall lose the chair shall confess their defeat on paper and shall deliver their confession to the head bard, that is, to him who shall obtain the chair; and those who shall lose shall drink the health of the head bard, and each of them shall give him six pennies, and he shall be their chief, unless they be victorious in other eisteddfodau."

After Grufudd ab Cynan, princes of the various provinces confirmed the statutes which he had made concerning the practice of poetry and music, and added others in which rules were laid down for the conduct of the professors of the poetical and musical arts, and the fees stated, which the professors of those arts were severally to receive according to their rank, with many other matters which our limits will not allow us to detail.

No very celebrated poets arose amongst the Britons from the time of Llywarch Hên till the commencement of the twelfth century, when several appeared and sang the praises of the princes who patronised them and discussed in rhyme many metaphysical questions. They appear to have been for the most part disciples of Taliesin. Amongst them was Cynddelw, whose name signifies prototype or original image, who wrote the following remarkable line * :

* * * *

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

The two poets of the greatest merit who flourished during the time of the Welsh princes were Gwalchmai and Dafydd Benfras. The former lived about 1150, and was bard to Owain, prince of Gwynedd, or North Wales. He was the author of a piece well known to the British public by a paraphrase made by Gray under the title of "The Triumphs of Owen." It is by far his best performance, though others of his pieces are well worthy of attention. Dafydd Benfras was domestic bard to Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, prince of Gwynedd and titular King of Wales, who flourished during the first half of the thirteenth century Several of his compositions, addressed to his patron, are to be found in the "Archaiology," amongst which is a very remarkable ode, the military part of which is, unless we are much mistaken, connected with the following piece of history:

"In the year 1210, Llewelyn made several fierce incursions upon the English, which incensed King John to such a degree that he determined to annihilate the power of Llewelyn. Raising a large army he marched into North Wales, vowing that he would destroy everything that he should find; but not content with his own army, he summoned the following Welsh princes to meet him at Chester: Gwenwynwyn of Powys; Howel ap Gruffudd ab Cynan; Madoc ap Gruffudd Maelawr; Maredud ab Robert of Gedewin; and Maelgwn and Rhys Gric, sons of the Lord Rhys. No sooner did Llewelyn and his people hear of the coming of the King and his host than they retired with their property into the heart of the country, even unto the mountain of Eryri or Snowdon, and so did the inhabitants of Mona with all they possessed. The King and his army advanced as far as the Castle of Teganwy, but there the army was so much in lack of provisions that an egg was sold for a penny-halfpenny, and horseflesh was deemed very luxurious fare indeed, on which account the King of

England retreated about Whitsuntide, his purpose unaccomplished, after having lost in a disgraceful manner many men and much property."

A translation of the ode in question will be found in the proper place.*

* See "The Songs of Scandinavia and Other Poems and Ballads," vol. ii. p. 256, in the Norwich Edition of Borrow's works.—[Ed.]

CHAPTER V

In the year 1293, Wales was first brought under the sway of England, and about forty years after that period a bright star arose and shed far and wide over the mountain land the pure rays of its lustre. We allude to the wonderful poet, Dafydd ab Gwilym. He was a South Welshman, born at a place called Bro Gynnin in Cardiganshire, a region which has on its southern side Carmarthenshire and on its northern the shire of Trefaldyn, better known as Montgomeryshire, which is the most southern county of North Wales. Though born in wedlock, he was not conceived legitimately. His mother being discovered by her parents to be pregnant was turned out of doors by them, whereupon she went to her lover, who married her, though in so doing he acted contrary to the advice of his relations. A general reconciliation at last took place. The parents of Ab Gwilym, though highly connected, do not appear to have possessed much property. The boy was educated by his mother's brother, Llywelyn ab Gwilym Fychan, a chief of Cardiganshire, but his chief patron in after life was a cousin of his father, Ifor, surnamed Hael or the bountiful, a chieftain of Glamorganshire. This personage took him to his house, made him his steward and tutor to his daughter. With this young lady Ab Gwilym speedily fell in love, and the damsel returned his passion. Ifor, however, not approving of the connection, sent his daughter to Anglesey and

caused her to take the veil in a nunnery of that island. Dafydd pursued her, but not being able to obtain an interview, he returned to his patron, who gave him a kind reception. Under Ifor's roof he cultivated poetry with great assiduity and wonderful success. Whilst still very young, being taunted with the circumstances of his birth by a brother-bard called Rhys Meigan, he retorted in an ode so venomously bitter that his adversary after hearing it fell down and expired. Shortly after this event he was made Head Bard of Glamorganshire by universal acclamation.

After a stay of some time with Ifor he returned to his native county and lived at Bro Gynnin. Here he fell in love with a young lady of birth called Dyddgu, who did not return his passion. He did not break his heart, however, on her account, but speedily bestowed it on the fair Morfudd, whom he first saw at Rhosyr in Anglesey, to which place both had gone, probably on a religious account. The lady, after some demur, consented to become his wife. Her parents, however, would hear nothing about their union, whereupon their hands were joined beneath the greenwood tree by one Madog Benfras, a bard and a great friend of Ab Gwilym. The joining of people's hands by bards was probably a relic of Druidism. Marriages of this kind were generally considered binding by the Welsh and were seldom set aside. The ecclesiastical law, however, did not recognise them, and the parents of Morfudd by appealing to the law soon separated the lovers. After confining the lady for a short time they bestowed her hand in marriage upon a chieftain of the neighbourhood, very rich but rather old, with a hump on his back, on which account he was nicknamed Bow Bach or Little Humpback. Morfudd, however,

who passed her time in rather a dull manner with this person, which would not have been the case, had she done her duty by endeavouring to make the poor man comfortable and by visiting the sick and needy around her, was soon induced by the bard to elope with him. The lovers fled to Glamorgan, where Ifor Hael, not much to his own credit, received them with open arms, probably forgetting how he had immured his own daughter in a convent rather than bestow her on Ab Gwilym. Having a hunting-lodge in a forest on the banks of the lovely Taf, he allotted it to the fugitives as a residence. Ecclesiastical law, however, as strong in wild Wales as in other parts of Europe, soon followed them into Glamorgan and very properly separated them. The lady was restored to her husband and Ab Gwilym fined to a very high amount. Not being able to pay the fine, he was cast into prison, but then the men of Glamorgan arose to a man, swearing that their Head Bard should not remain in prison. "Then pay his fine," said the ecclesiastical law, or rather, the ecclesiastical lawyer. "So we will," said the men of Glamorgan. And so they did. Every man put his hand into his pocket, the amount was soon raised, the fine paid and the bard set free.

Ab Gwilym did not forget this kindness of the men of Glamorgan, and to requite it wrote an address "To the Sun," in which he requests that luminary to visit Glamorgan, to bless it and to keep it from harm. The piece concludes with some noble lines somewhat to this effect :

> "If every strand oppression strong
> Should arm against the son of song,
> The weary wight would find, I ween,
> A welcome in Glamorgan green."

Some time after his release he meditated a second

elopement with Morfudd and even induced her to consent to go off with him. A friend, to whom he disclosed what he was thinking of doing, asking him whether he would a second time venture to take such a step, "I will," said the bard, "in the name of God and the men of Glamorgan." No second elopement, however, took place, the bard probably thinking, and perhaps justly, that neither God nor the men of Glamorgan would help him a second time out of such an affair. He did not attain to any very advanced age, but died when about sixty, some twenty years before the rising of Glendower. Some time before his death his mind fortunately took a decidedly religious turn.

He is said in his youth to have been eminently handsome, tall, slender, with yellow hair falling in ringlets down his shoulders. He is likewise said to have been a great libertine. The following story is told of him. In a certain neighbourhood he had a great many mistresses, some married and others not. Once upon a time in the month of June he made a secret appointment with each of his mistresses, the place and hour of meeting being the same for all. Each was to meet him at the same hour beneath a mighty oak, which stood in the midst of a forest glade. Some time before the appointed hour he went, and climbing up the oak, hid himself amidst the dense foliage of its boughs. When the hour arrived he observed all the nymphs tripping along simultaneously to the place of appointment; all came, to the number of twenty-four; not one stayed away. For some time they stayed beneath the oak, staring at each other. At length an explanation ensued and it appeared that they had all come to meet Ab Gwilym. "O, the treacherous monster," said they with one accord, "only let him show himself and we will tear

him to pieces." "Will you ?" said Ab Gwilym from the oak. "Here am I. Let her who has been most wanton with me make the first attack upon me." The females remained for some time speechless; all of a sudden, however, their anger kindled, not against the bard, but against each other; from harsh and taunting words they soon came to actions; hair was torn off, faces were scratched; blood flowed from cheek and nose. Whilst the tumult was at its fiercest Ab Gwilym slipped away.

The writer merely repeats this story, and he repeats it as concisely as possible, in order to have an opportunity of saying that he does not believe one particle of it. If he believed it, he would forthwith burn the most cherished volume of the small collection of books from which he derives delight and recreation, namely, that which contains the songs of Ab Gwilym, for he would have nothing in his possession belonging to such a heartless scoundrel as Ab Gwilym must have been, had he got up the scene above described. Any common man, who would expose to each other and the world a number of hapless, trusting females who had favoured him with their affections, and from the top of a tree would feast his eyes on their agonies of shame and rage, would deserve to be emasculated. Had Ab Gwilym been so dead to every feeling of gratitude and honour as to play the part which the story makes him play, he would have deserved not only to be emasculated, but to be scourged with harp-strings in every market town in Wales, and to be dismissed from the service of the Muse. But the writer repeats that he does not believe one tittle of the story, though Ab Gwilym's biographer, the learned and celebrated William Owen, not only seems to believe it, but rather chuckles over it. It is the opinion of the writer that the story is of Italian

origin, and that it formed part of one of the many rascally novels brought over to England after the marriage of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward the Third, with Violante, daughter of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan.

Dafydd ab Gwilym has been in general considered as a songster who never employed his Muse on any subject save that of love, and there can be no doubt that by far the greater number of his pieces are devoted more or less to the subject of love. But to consider him merely in the light of an amatory poet would be wrong. He has written poems of wonderful power on almost every conceivable subject. Ab Gwilym has been styled the Welsh Ovid, and with great justice, but not merely because like the Latin he wrote admirably on subjects of love ; he resembled the Latin in more points than one. The Latin was not merely an amatory poet. Let the shade of Pythagoras say whether the poet, who embodied in immortal verse the oldest, the most wonderful, and at the same time the most humane of all philosophy, was a mere amatory poet. Let the shade of blind Homer be called up to say whether the bard who composed the tremendous line, equal to any save *one* of his own,

"Surgit ad hos clypei dominus septemplicis Ajax,"

was a mere amatory songster. Nevertheless, there was no species of poetry in which the Latin shone in which the Welshman might not be said to display equal merit. Ab Gwilym, then, has been fairly styled the Welsh Ovid. But he is something more, and here let there be no sneers about *Welsh ;* the Welsh are equal in genius, intellect, and learning to any people under the sun, and speak a language older than Greek, and which is one of the immediate parents of the

Greek. We repeat he was something more than the Welsh Ovid. He was the Welsh Horace and wrote light, agreeable, sportive pieces, equal to any things of the kind which Horace composed in his best moods. But he was something more: he could write verses in the style of Tibullus, which the Latin would not have been ashamed to own. Ashamed! "The Ode to His Shadow," written something in the style of Tibullus, contains as much genius as any six pieces by the Latin. But he was yet something more: he was the Welsh Martial and wrote pieces equal in pungency to those of the great Roman epigrammatist, perhaps more than equal, for we never heard that any of Martial's epigrams killed anybody, whereas Ab Gwilym's piece of vituperation on Rhys Meigan (pity that poets should be so virulent) caused the Welshman to fall down dead. But he was something more: he could, if he pleased, be a Tyrtæus. He was no fighter (where was there ever a poet that was?), but he wrote an ode on a sword, the only warlike piece that he ever wrote, the best poem on the subject ever written in any language. Finally, he was something more: he was what not one of the great Latin poets was, a Christian, that is in his latter days, when he began to feel the vanity of all human pursuits, when his nerves began to be unstrung, his hair to fall off, and his teeth to drop out; and then he composed sacred pieces which entitle him to rank with—we were going to say Cædmon; had we done so, we should have done wrong: no uninspired poet ever handled sacred subjects like the great Saxon Skald—but which entitled him to be called a great religious poet, inferior to none but the protégé of Hilda.

Here some people may utter the following queries: Is it possible that the writer can be serious in what he has said above in connection with Ab Gwilym?

Is it possible that this Welshman displays in his writings the particular excellences of so many poets, the gems and glories of antiquity? Is it right to call him the Welsh Ovid, Martial, etc.? To such the writer would reply that he was never more serious in his life than when he said what he did above about Ab Gwilym in connection with certain other poets. With respect to the title of the Welsh Ovid bestowed upon him, he must observe that that title did not originate with him. Men wiser, better, and more learned than the writer (the writer makes no pretensions to learning) styled Ab Gwilym the Welsh Ovid before the writer was born. The writer agrees with those wiser and better men, who said that Ab Gwilym was the Welsh Ovid, and if he styles him the Welsh Horace, Martial, etc., it is simply because he has observed that he was quite as much an adept in their several styles as he was in that of a greater poet than any of them, his proficiency in which induced men who knew what they were talking about to style him the Welsh Ovid, and who very probably considered him the Welsh Horace, etc., though they may not have styled him so to the world.

But, it may be asked, if Ab Gwilym was so great a poet, how is it that his merits have not been long made known to the world through translation? Translations have been made from him. Translation, translation! How many of the great poets of antiquity would be thought much of, provided they had to depend for fame almost entirely upon translation? What would be thought of Horace and many others, were they not read in the classes in the original language? Hear what the learned and acute Dr. William King said about certain songs of Horace and translations from them: "I would never read the first stanza in the 'Carmen Seculare' without

falling into a fit of devotion, and yet when I read it in the best translation it does not affect me. Thus likewise those beautiful odes, 'Donec gratus eram,' etc., and 'Quem tu, Melpomene,' etc. (of which Scaliger said he would rather be the author than King of Aragon), rendered into any modern language, do not seem to deserve a hundredth part of the praise bestowed upon the originals."

To be a competent translator of a great poet a person should almost be as great a poet as his original. Homer alone of all the classic writers appears to have found an adequate translator. He found a Pope to translate him into English, and there is no doubt that Pope's translation, the grand poem of the English language, increased Homer's fame both in England and abroad. But it certainly was a lucky thing for Homer that he was a Greek and wrote nearly a thousand years before Christ. Ab Gwilym has not found an adequate translator nor is likely to find one. But supposing that he had long ago found a person to do him the same justice in English as Pope did Homer, would he have received his full meed of fame? Certainly not; the man was not a Greek, but a Welshman. It was a good thing for Homer that he did not write in Welsh. It is true that he did to a certain extent write in Welsh, but the world has hitherto been unaware of that fact, and even the general knowledge of that fact at present would do very little harm to the reputation of Homer, which has been established for upwards of two thousand years. But had Homer written the "Iliad" in the fourteenth century in Welsh, and had Pope in the eighteenth century translated him into English, would the world think much of Homer at the present time? The writer believes not; he is sure that the English would not think much of him or of his translator

either. Can a person, whose name translated is David Williams, ever have been visited by such a genteel person as the Muse? Can a poet come out of Wales? Here the writer shouts, "Yes! A poet *can* come out of Wales, even as a prophet could come out of Galilee."

The writer repeats that it was a lucky thing for Homer that he did not write in Welsh, and he begs leave to add that it was an unfortunate thing for David Williams that he did not write in Greek.

Before ceasing to speak of Ab Gwilym, it will be necessary to state that his amatory pieces, which constitute more than one-half of his productions, must be divided into two classes, the purely amatory and those only partly amatory. His poems to Dyddgu and the daughter of Ifor Hael are productions very different from those addressed to Morfudd. There can be no doubt that he had a sincere affection for the two first. There is no levity in the cowydds which he addressed to them, and he seldom introduces other objects beside the object of his love. But in his cowydds addressed to Morfudd is there no levity? Is Morfudd ever prominent? His cowydds to that woman abound with humorous levity, and for the most part have far less to do with her than with natural objects, the snow, the mist, the trees of the forest, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the stream. His first piece to Morfudd is full of levity quite inconsistent with true love. It states how after seeing her for the first time at Rhosyr in Anglesey and falling in love with her, he sends her a present of wine by the hands of a servant, which present she refuses, casting the wine contemptuously over the head of the valet. This commencement promises little in the way of true passion, so that we are not disappointed when we read a little farther on that the bard is dead and buried, all on account of love, and

that Morfudd makes a pilgrimage to Mynyw to seek for pardon for killing him, nor when we find him begging the popish image to convey a message to her; then presently we almost lose sight of Morfudd amidst birds, animals, and trees, and we are not sorry that we do, for though Ab Gwilym is mighty in humour, great in describing the emotions of love and the beauties of the lovely, he is greatest of all in describing objects of nature; indeed, in describing them he has no equal, and the writer has no hesitation in saying that in many of his cowydds, in which he describes various objects of nature by which he sends messages to Morfudd, he shows himself a greater poet than Ovid appears in any one of his Metamorphoses. There are many poets who attempt to describe natural objects without being acquainted with them, but Ab Gwilym is not one of these. No one was better acquainted with nature than himself; he was a stroller, and there is every probability that during the greater part of the summer he had no other roof than the foliage, and that the voices of birds and animals were more familiar to his ears than was the voice of man. During the summer months indeed, in the early part of his life, he was, if we may credit him, generally lying *perdu* in the woodland or mountain recesses near the habitation of his mistress, both before and after her marriage, awaiting her secret visits, made whenever she could escape the vigilance of her parents or the watchful jealousy of her husband; and during her absence he had nothing better to do than to observe objects of nature and to describe them. His "Ode to the Fox" was composed during one of these occasions.

Our limits will not allow us to say so much as we would wish about the genius of this wonderful man, the greatest of his country's songsters, well calculated

by nature to be the honour of any age and language. The bards, his cotemporaries and those who succeeded him, were perfectly convinced of his superiority, not only over themselves but over all the poets of the past, and one, and a mighty one, whom we shall presently speak of, went so far as to insinuate that after Ab Gwilym it would be of little avail for any one to make verses :

" Aed lle mae'r eang dangneff,
Ac aed y gerdd gydag ef."

Iolo Goch.

" To Heaven's high peace let him depart,
And with him go the minstrel art."

He was buried at Ystrad Flur, a celebrated monastery in Cardiganshire, better known by the name of Strata Florida. A few words about this place, to which the writer has made a pilgrimage.

After wandering for many miles towards the south over a bleak, moory country, you come to a place called Tir y groes, or Land of the Cross, a miserable village, consisting of a few half-ruined cottages situated on the top of a hill. From the hill you look down on a wide valley of a russet colour, along which a river runs towards the south. The whole scene is cheerless ; sullen hills are all around. Descending the hill you enter a large village, divided into two by the river, which here runs from east to west, but frequently makes a turn. There is much mire in the street ; immense swine lie in the mire, who turn up their snouts at you as you pass. Women in Welsh hats stand in the mire along with men without any hats at all, but with short pipes in their mouths. They are talking together. As you pass, however, they hold their tongues, the women leering contemptuously at you, the men glaring sullenly at

you, and causing tobacco-smoke to curl in your face. On your taking off your hat, however, and enquiring the way to the *monachlog*, everybody is civil enough and twenty voices tell you the way to the monastery. You ask the name of the river—"The Teivi, sir, the Teivi"; the name of the bridge—"Pont y rhyd bendigaid—the bridge of the blessed ford, sir." You cross the bridge of the blessed ford and presently, leaving the main road, you turn to the east by a dunghill up a narrow lane parallel with the river. After proceeding a mile up the lane amidst trees and copses, and crossing a little brook which runs into the Teivi, out of which you drink, you see before you, in the midst of a field in which are tombstones and broken ruins, a rustic-looking church; a farmhouse stands near it, in the garden of which stands the framework of a large gateway. You cross over into the churchyard, stand on a green mound and look about you. You are now in the very midst of the Monachlog Ystrad Flur, the celebrated monastery of Strata Florida, to which in old times popish pilgrims from all parts of the world repaired. The scene is solemn and impressive. On the north side of the river a large bulky hill called Bunk Pen Bannedd looks down upon the ruins and the church, and on the south side, some way behind the farmhouse, is another hill which does the same. Rugged mountains form the background of the valley to the east, down from which comes murmuring the fleet but shallow Teivi. Such is the scenery which surrounds what remains of Strata Florida. Those scanty, broken ruins compose all which remains of that celebrated monastery, in which kings, saints, and mitred abbots were buried, and in which or in whose precincts was buried Dafydd ab Gwilym, the greatest poet of the Cimbric race, and one of the very first of the world.

CHAPTER VI

It is now necessary to speak of Iolo Goch; perhaps we ought to have spoken of Iolo Goch before. He lived long before Ab Gwilym and composed poetry before Ab Gwilym was born; but then he lived long after Ab Gwilym and composed an ode on the death of that illustrious genius. Iolo Goch was a great poet, but independent of being a great poet he was a remarkable man. He attained to an enormous age; but it is less surprising that he should have attained to an enormous age than that at a period when his grandchildren, supposing that he had any, must have been elderly men, he should not only have retained in a great degree the bodily vigour of youth, but displayed powers of mind superior to those which he displayed in middle manhood. In a word, he was moving about with "the wild Glendower," and composing odes on that personage, which were certainly the best pieces which he ever composed, after he had attained the age of one hundred and ten years. The real name of this remarkable man was Llwyd; Iolo Goch, or Red Julius, was only his poetical appellation. He was born whilst Gwynedd was governed by a native prince; may have witnessed, for what we know, the last fight on the side of Snowdon; no doubt, for he was a real Welshman, shed tears of grief and indignation at the ignominious end of the brave Llywelyn ab Griffith, and at that of his brother, Dafydd ab Griffith, who was executed

at Shrewsbury, and whose heart is said, after it had been torn from his body and cast into a fire kindled at the foot of the gallows, to have sprung out with a loud report into the eyes of the hangman, blinding him for ever. Iolo was of an ancient family, was Lord of Llechryd, and was born at a place called Coed y Pantwn in the Vale of Clwyd, where he generally resided throughout his life. Besides being a bard he was a very learned man, was bachelor of both laws, and one of the best genealogists of his time. At what college or abbey he studied we do not know. One of the earliest pieces which he is known to have composed is a dirge on Tudor Hên ab Gronw, who founded the priory at Bangor in the year 1299, and died in 1311. It is therefore probable that Iolo studied at Bangor. This dirge was written just eighty-nine years before the insurrection of Glendower, in which Iolo played rather a prominent part. The most interesting period of his life seems to have been that in which he devoted himself to the service of the great Welsh chieftain, of whom a short account will perhaps be acceptable.

Owen Glendower was born in 1348, and was a lineal descendant of Welsh princes of the three royal tribes of Wales. His appellation of Glendower or Glyndyfrdwy is local. Glyndyfrdwy signifies the Valley of the Two Waters. Two rivers, one of which runs out of the lake of Bala, uniting near that noble sheet of water, run in an easterly direction for about thirty miles down a fertile and beautiful valley called in Welsh Glyndyfrdwy, in English the Valley of the Dee, Dee being merely a corruption of the British word "dwy," which signifies "two." From this valley, which formed a part of his immense possessions in North Wales, Owen derived his surname. He was originally intended for the law, but disliking the profession, which ill accorded with his warlike

genius, he soon adopted that of arms, and served with distinction in Scotland, France, and Ireland, under the English banner. He was a favourite and shield-bearer of Richard the Second, and was waiting upon that unfortunate monarch when he was made a prisoner by Bolingbroke at Flint Castle. After that event Owen returned to his princely possessions, residing principally at Sycharth, where he had a kind of timber palace on a little knoll, which was surrounded at the bottom by a moat. Here he lived in a style of rude magnificence, surrounded by his family and retainers who adored him, listening to the songs of bards, and particularly to those of Iolo Goch, whom he had invited from the fertile valley of Clwyd to come and take up his residence with him. Mischief, however, was brooding against him. He had two redoubtable enemies, one on the throne and one in his immediate neighbourhood. Bolingbroke, now become Henry the Fourth, feared and detested him on account of his influence in Wales and his attachment to Richard the Second, and would gladly hail a pretext to attempt his ruin. A certain Lord Grey of Ruthin hated Glendower on account of his large possessions, part of which he hoped at some future time to obtain. This man, who was a minion of Henry and his Lord-Lieutenant in Flint and Denbighshire, soon afforded Henry, in the hope of furthering his own views, such a pretext as he longed for. Henry, being at war with Scotland, summoned Owen Glendower by letter to meet him with his retainers at a certain time and place, in order to attend him in an expedition against that kingdom. Lord Grey, however, who, as Lord-Lieutenant of the district in which Glendower resided, had the charge of sending the letter to that chieftain, purposely delayed doing so until it was impossible for Glendower to gather his forces and appear with

them at the place of rendezvous at the time appointed. He therefore remained at home. In consequence of his seeming contumacy he was declared an outlaw by Henry, and his estates in the Valley of Clwyd bestowed upon Lord Grey, who did not fail to ask for them. Then followed the terrible insurrection of Glendower, which made Henry tremble on his throne. The incensed chieftain speedily burnt the town of Ruthin to the ground after sacking it, bid defiance to Henry, who twice invaded Wales and was twice compelled to make a disgraceful retreat, beat Henry's allies, the Flemings of Pembrokeshire, in a bloody and obstinate engagement, defeated and took prisoner Roger Mortimer, who led against him the vassals of his nephew, Edmund Mortimer, who was then an infant and confined in the Tower of London ; and also defeated and took prisoner his old enemy, Lord Grey, whom he conveyed to the mountains of Snowdon and whom he did not liberate till he had extracted from him a considerable ransom and had forced him to marry his daughter Janet. He was now for some time the real sovereign of Wales, and was in 1404 even crowned king at Machynlleth. Many people thought that he was the man who, according to the prophecy of Merddyn, was to drive the Saxons from fair Britain ; many a fiery Welshman said, " We shall now have our own again " ; and there was much singing of the stanza of Taliesin :

" Then after long pain
Repose we shall obtain,
When sway barbaric has purged us clean ;
And Britons shall regain
Their crown and their domain,
And the foreign oppressor be no more seen."

Fortune, however, at last turned against him. The battle of Shrewsbury, in which " reft of his aid the

Percy fell," was a death-blow to his success, as it freed Henry from domestic foes and enabled him to turn against him all the resources of England. In 1404 Glendower was fain to crave assistance of troops from France, which that country afforded, but which did not avail the gallant Welshman, who lost battle after battle, skirmish after skirmish, his brothers and sons falling one after another, gallantly fighting in his cause, till at last, being unable to offer any further opposition to his enemies, he retired to some place of concealment to die of a broken heart, where nobody knows, though there is a tradition that he breathed his last in the house of one of his daughters, who was married to Sir John Scudamore of Herefordshire. He was the greatest of Welsh warriors, a portentous but, upon the whole, not a bad man, having committed but one act which can properly be called a blot on his scutcheon, namely, causing his daughter to marry, not as Shakespear has it, Edmund Mortimer, who was a child and a prisoner to Henry, but Lord Grey, a very bad man, his ancient enemy, and the cause of his involving his country in contention and bloodshed. He was in every respect a far better man than Bolingbroke, whom God, however, permitted to triumph over him, because it did not agree with the designs of His providence to permit Wales to become an independent kingdom, as in such an event she must have existed in continual contention with England, and have crippled the latter, whilst herself bleeding from every pore.

We now return to Iolo. For some time previous to the insurrection he lived with Glendower at Sycharth, cherished and honoured by the chieftain, who was a passionate admirer of the Muse. Shortly previous to that event he rendered a good piece of service to his patron, provided the following anecdote

be true. Harry the Fourth wrote to Lord Grey, begging him to devise some plan for getting Owen into his power. Thereupon Lord Grey sent a message to Owen informing him that he would dine with him at a particular spot on a particular day. Owen returned for answer that he would give him a hearty welcome, provided he brought with him no more than thirty men. The lord came at the appointed time with very few people along with him, but with a host of armed men following stealthily behind. Owen welcomed his guest to table, but had taken the precaution of placing men on the top of a hill to look out whilst he should be dining. In the midst of the banquet the watchmen perceived armed men, too numerous to count, beginning to fill the dale, and begged Iolo Goch to beg Owen to be on his guard. Iolo, whom nobody suspected, forthwith went into the pavilion where the banquet was being held and sang slowly an englyn, in which he gave Owen warning, for though Lord Grey understood the colloquial Welsh, the poetical language was quite unintelligible to him. In the englyn the bard alluded to the fate of the unfortunate Dafydd ab Griffith, who had been betrayed into the power of Edward the First by means of a scheme somewhat similar to that which had been laid to entrap Owen, and also to the singular circumstance connected with his execution.

> "Remember the head of a chief of our land,
> At Christmas struck off by an infamous hand;
> The collop of Shrewsbury bear thou in mind,
> Which leapt from the fire the headsman to blind."

Owen, thus warned, took the first opportunity of slipping out of the pavilion and was speedily amongst the hills.

Iolo Goch witnessed most of the triumphs of Owen and some of his reverses. He saw the crown

placed upon the head of his beloved hero at Machynlleth, on which occasion he composed a noble ode, and remained with him till Owen as a friend begged him to consult his safety and to retire to his possessions in the Vale of Clwyd. Long after the disappearance of the great chieftain Iolo entertained hopes that the star of Glyndyfrdwy would again arise, and endeavoured by fiery odes to make his countrymen believe that Owen would reappear and drive the dogs of Caer Lud from their lair into the sea. He seems, however, to have survived his hopes and his hero too. At an age which we are afraid to mention, this remarkable man, whose mental powers appear to have remained unimpaired to the last, composed an englyn to the following effect :

" One thousand four hundred, no less and no more,
Was the date of the rising of Owen Glendower ;
When fifteen were added still Owen stood bold,
Some years he lived longer, though broken and old." *

We now proceed to say something of his poetry. Forty-nine of his cowydds have been preserved. Amongst these, those which possess most interest are the ones relating to Owen Glendower : they are seven in number. We will mention them in the order in which we believe them to have been written. One, probably the earliest, is on the return of Owen Glendower from Scotland. It welcomes him back to Sycharth and his friends. The second is generally called the invitation poem, and is probably the most remarkable of Iolo's productions. Owen had invited the bard to come and visit him at Sycharth ; the bard complied, and to requite the chieftain for his hospitality composed the poem in question, in which

* Variant of the last two lines :

" Till fifteen were added, with courage ne'er cold
Liv'd Owen, though latterly Owen was old."—[Ed.]

he describes the chieftain's castle, his manner of life, his family and household with a minuteness perfectly extraordinary, for which the Welsh historian and antiquary ought to consider themselves deeply indebted. The third is a cowydd, no doubt written at Sycharth, on the pedigree of Owen Glendower, in which the bard displays his great knowledge in Welsh genealogy. It is highly curious, and traces satisfactorily Owen's descent from the kings of the three Cambrian tribes. Then comes an ode to the comet which appeared in the month of March, 1402. This piece was written some time after the commencement of the insurrection of Glendower. It is a piece of great power and brings the fiery wanderer of heaven most vividly before our eyes. The comet is, however, forced into the service of Glendower. The bard remembers that a star had appeared in the east to announce the birth of Christ, that another portentous star was the forerunner of the advent of Arthur, and asserts that the present star prognosticates a king, a native king, who shall reign over Wales, dispensing bounty :

" Brenin, hael am win, a medd,
Dewr a gawn, o dir Gwynedd."

" A King who wine and mead shall give
From Gwynedd's land we shall receive."

The fifth is a piece in praise of Glendower, and was probably written just after his coronation at Machynlleth, when he was at the very summit of his greatness. It is full of exultation and gratified hatred :

" Llyma fyd rhag siffryd sais
Mynych iawn a dymunais."

" Here's the life I've sigh'd for long,
To see abash'd the Saxon throng."

He shouts at the onset and then dilates on the noble and martial qualities of his hero in stirring strains of enthusiasm. Then after an interval of a great many years comes the sixth piece, another ode to Glendower, but how different in tone from the one just mentioned! The cherub had fallen from his place of pride, his last fight had been fought, and he had disappeared :

> " Tall man whom Harry loves but ill,
> Thou'st had reverses ; breath'st thou still ? "

commences the affectionate bard, and then exclaims with patriotic fury :

> " If so, with fire-spear seek the fray,
> Come and thy target broad display ! "

This piece was evidently composed by the bard in order to breathe fresh spirit into his dejected countrymen ; it holds out the most extravagant hopes and intimates that Glendower is gone to Rome, in order to procure a warrant under the seal of Saint Peter, in order to take possession of his kingdom ; then it hints that he has visited the Holy Land, whence he will repair to Denmark and, procuring there a powerful fleet, will sail from thence to Ireland and obtain fresh assistance from the Irish chieftain Owtyls, probably O'Neal ; and shortly afterwards, landing in Wales with a Dano-Irish host, the chieftain is to regain his rights after nine battles, in all of which he is to triumph over the Saxons :

> " Nine fights he'll wage and then have done,
> Successful in them every one."

All these pieces connected with Owen Glendower are so exceedingly interesting, owing to the high talents of the writer and his close communication with the chieftain, that it is highly surprising that the world has not long since been made acquainted with them.

Four of them, it is true, have been printed in the original Welsh, but we are not aware that any attempt has been hitherto made to translate or elucidate any one of them, except the invitation poem, which Pennant in his "Tour through Wales" has briefly noticed and from which he has translated a few lines.

Of Iolo's pieces unconnected with Owen Glendower the most remarkable are the following: Ode to the Husbandman, in which he makes mention of Hu Gadarn, or Hesus, the founder of husbandry, and his oxen; Odes to the Virgin, to God, and to the World, and a humorous piece on his beard; likewise a dirge on Edward the Third, which does full justice to the great and noble qualities of the illustrious deceased.* The spirit in which it is written might surprise us did we not bear in mind the following facts. During the whole reign of Edward the Third, Wales had enjoyed peace and tranquillity; there had been little or no confiscation on the part of the English Crown or plundering on the part of its barons; the feelings and prejudices of the people had not been outraged, and above all, the Welsh had shared in the triumphs of the English in France. The Welsh had contributed to gain the battle of Crecy by rushing in amidst the French knights and men-at-arms when in confusion, and committing grisly havoc with their *cullell hirion* and pouring out like water some of the proudest blood of France. There was, moreover, a particular band, commanded by Captain Rhys Gwyan, in the service of Edward to the time of his death, whose deeds had rendered the Welsh name famous both in France and England. So it is little to be wondered at that the fiery old Welshman, if we can call Iolo old when he

* In another fragment: "This piece on the great father of England's greatest warrior is written with a spirit of candour and does full justice to the great and noble qualities of the illustrious deceased."—[Ed.]

had only attained the age of eighty, in his dirge on Edward the Third did full justice to the memory of Edward ap Edward, of whom he and many of his countrymen probably said that he only lacked being a Welshman to be a perfect paragon of princes. And here we may add that the Welsh seldom or never showed any spirit of insubordination against those English princes who treated them kindly. If they were good subjects to Edward the Third, they were likewise true to his unfortunate grandson, Richard the Second, and for the same reason. There were no risings in Wales against Richard the Second, no fiery odes against him by Red Julius, but there were risings for him and bands levied to join him on his return from Ireland, and if the bands dispersed before he returned, it was not from any lack of good will towards him, but because all kinds of fearful rumours were rife, amongst which was the unfounded rumour of his death. Hear what Shakespear's Welsh captain says, who may be considered as neither more nor less than Owen Glendower, the friend and scutiger of the unhappy victim of Bolingbroke's villainy :

> " . . . Our countrymen are gone and fled,
> As well assur'd Richard their king is dead." *

Red Julius, after Dafydd ab Gwilym, has a right to be considered as the greatest poet of Wales. The time of his death is not exactly known. It is believed that his remains were interred in the Abbey of the Vale.

But however quiet Wales may have been under Edward the Third and his grandson, and however willing the Welsh may have been to drop during their reign the old grudge and hate which they bore to the Saxon, no sooner did Bolingbroke usurp the Crown

* The quotation from " Richard II," II. iv. 16–17, is not in the MS., but a space is left blank for it.—[Ed.]

than it again became a scene of confusion, and the old grudge and hate burst out again with ten-fold violence. Bolingbroke was an exceedingly talented but a very bad and unjust man, though like many other bad men with talents, he was permitted to do what in the long run promoted the general good. The man hated the Welsh, or rather the inhabitants of North Wales, because they had been well disposed to the unhappy victim of his subtlety and violence, Richard the Second, and above all hated one man, the Welsh captain who but for . . .* and the prophecies of . . .* prophet, and the unfounded rumour of Richard's death, which prevented him from keeping his followers together, would have established the son of the Black Prince firmly on his throne. Bolingbroke hated Owen Glendower, for that was the name of the captain, from the bottom of his heart, and by the unjustifiable means which he took to ruin him brought on the terrible Welsh insurrection of 1401, which very near[ly] brought destruction upon his own head.

* MS. illegible.

CHAPTER VII

Rhys Goch o Eryri, that is, Red Rhys of Snowdon, flourished from 1400 to 1420. Like Red Julius he was a strenuous partisan of Owen Glendower, about whom he wrote a piece of great spirit, commencing, "Y mae hiraeth i'm hoeri," or "Longing chills my bosom." His most extraordinary piece is an abusive ode to the fox which had killed his peacock, which ode was styled by the poet Sion Tudor, "Ystordyn Meddwdawd," or "The Test of Drunkenness," as he said, no drunken man being ever able to repeat it. We see no reason to disbelieve him when the following is a specimen of it:

> "Llesgnaid llau hwppiaid llippa, lledrattais
> Llwynog lleipr budrhais ddyfais ddifa;
> Lledpen cul aren yn clora, 'rhyd rhos
> Lledros marwydos y meryda." *

Our own wonder is that any sober man should have written it. In it every vile and terrible epithet is lavished on the fox, and surely never was animal so abused as Reynard is in this piece, which, however, could only have been composed by a man, whether drunk or sober, of considerable fancy and consummate knowledge of the Welsh language.

Further on we now come [to] Gryfydd Hiraethog. The meaning of the surname "Hiraethog" is "addicted to longing," the root being "hiraeth,"

* Borrow gives only the word "Llesgnaid." I have added the rest.—[Ed.]

" longing," a feeling which the Welsh say they always experience towards their country when away from it. Whether Gryfydd called himself Hiraethog because he was addicted to longing, or whether he took it from the place of his birth or residence, some glen or valley so called, we do not know. He was a great poet, and was particularly skilled in a metre called Croes Cyng[h]anedd, or cross-consonancy, his excellence in which is alluded to in a dirge written upon him by one William Llŷn :

" In Eden's grove from Adam's mouth,
Upsprang a muse of noble growth ;
So from thy grave, O poet wise,
Cross-consonancy's boughs shall rise."

He was a poet and a wise man. None but a wise man would have uttered the apophthegm contained in the following stanza ; none but a poet could have written the stanza :

" He who satire's wont to sing
On himself shall satire bring."

Dafydd ab Edmund flourished about 1450. He was a native of Hanmer in Tegeingyl in North Wales. The name of the place where he lived was Pool Gweppra. He was a gentleman and a landed proprietor, and the best poet of Gwynedd, and it is said that there was no one in the whole of Wales during the time he flourished who could be compared with him for making an ode. During his time an eisteddfod was held at Carmarthen in 1450, in South Wales, under the auspices of Gruffydd ap Nicholas, by attending which Dafydd ab Edmund derived considerable honour. Gruffydd was a powerful chieftain, descended from the kings of Southern Wales. Seeing with regret that there was much confusion and dissension amongst the bardic order and that the rules of bardism

were neglected and nearly forgotten, he wished to hold an eisteddfod like those held by the ancient Welsh princes, in order to revive bardic enthusiasm and to replace bardic matters on a proper footing. He accordingly procured permission from Edward the Fourth, the British sovereign of the time, to hold an eisteddfod, and caused a notice to be published in every church and market-place that a year and a day after the date of the notice a congress of bards would be held at Carmarthen. He also caused Llawdden, a priest of Machynlleth, one of the most learned of the bards of Southern Wales, to draw up certain statutes with respect to bardic discipline, which it was intended the bards should subscribe and observe. No sooner did Dafydd ab Edmund hear of the proclamation than he determined to attend the congress, to try not only to obtain the prize, a small chair of silver, but to induce the [eisteddfod] to sanction certain alterations which he had been in the habit of making in the four-and-twenty measures which he considered would be improvements. When the time of congress was nearly at hand he accordingly set off. Of an adventure of his on the road and of his success at Carmarthen there is an amusing account in Welsh, from which we shall translate some passages.

Whilst journeying with his servant to Carmarthen, he arrived at the seat of a gentleman in Cardigan and asked for a night's lodging. On being told that he was welcome he alighted and went in. Now there chanced to be another poet in the house on his way to Carmarthen, whose name was John ap Howel Surdwal. This person suspected Dafydd to be a poet and communicated his suspicion to the gentleman of the house, who requested John ap Howel Surdwal to ask the strange man some question in rhyme, in order that they might judge by his answer

whether he was a poet or not. John then asked Dafydd the name of his horse. On his answering "Dobbin," John said:

"Which wouldst thou choose, O stranger, say,
Two fillies pied or Dobbin grey?"

Then Dafydd replied without any hesitation:

"Which is the best, O God decide,
Grey Dobbin or two fillies pied?"

John conveyed this reply to the gentleman, and they both clearly saw that the stranger was a learned poet of a ready muse. So they conducted him into the hall and showed him every kind of respect, and his servant too, for they shrewdly suspected that he was a poet also, as indeed he was. John observing that the servant was much better dressed than his master, having on a silken gown, whilst Dafydd was in a woollen coat, addressed him in the following couplet:

"What gallant's this in silken vest,
Who serves a clerk in woollen drest?"

and received for answer:

"No fool is he in silken vest,
Who wisdom serves in woollen drest.
The gallant shows a judgment good,
Who chooses happy servitude."

"Which is the master and which the man I really do not know," said John to the gentleman, "but one thing I am sure of, which is, that the chair will not be gained at Carmarthen save by one or the other of them." Shortly afterwards it was known that Gutyn Owain, the disciple of Dafydd ab Edmund, was the servant.

"I will go to Carmarthen with the strange man and his servant," said the gentleman, and so he did, and John went along with them. The servant was a

gentleman of as high a station as his master, and, indeed, the whole four were * quite equal in rank. When they arrived at Carmarthen, [Dafydd ab Edmund] must needs go in his woollen coat into the hall where the poets were assembled, and on one of them asking the one who stood next to him, "Who may that goat be?" the bard of Gwynedd replied:

> "I am no goat, a man am I,
> Though not endow'd with beauty high.
> If to the Muse thou dost belong,
> Tell me what is the chain of song."

And when the poets heard these lines, not one of them knew what answer to return. Whereupon Gruffydd ap Nicholas said to him, "O stranger, I see by your manners and appearance that you are a gentleman possessed of wisdom and instruction. Tell me now of what country you are a native, and you shall be as much honoured as any of the rest, and seated as high. We have here a round table like that of the Emperor Arthur, so that not one of those who sit at it is higher than the rest. So now take your seat, give what orders you please and you shall be obeyed." Dafydd replied, "I did not come to give orders, but to sing and to [hear] the statutes proclaimed and published by you, and to receive instruction from him who will give it and to give instruction to him who will receive it. I am a native of Gwynedd; my name is Dafydd ab Edmund of Pool Gweppra in Tegeingyl, and there is one with me who chooses to serve me as a servant, namely, Gutyn Owain, a gentleman and poet of Croes Oswallt." Then Gruffydd ap Nicholas caused Gutyn Owain to be called in and invited him to sit down at the round table; but Gutyn could not be induced to take a seat, because he was only a disciple, and he would stand up and serve his master against his

* MS. "was."—[Ed.]

master's wish and against that of Sir Gruffydd ap Nicholas. Both entreated him to do no such thing, but finding him obstinate they at last let him have his own way. And whilst the dinner was on the table, Gutyn Owain was so civil and attentive to every one, according to his rank, that everybody wondered, for his equal for gentlemanly bearing and civility had never before been seen. No sooner was the dinner over than Gruffydd ap Nicholas proposed this question to the poets and requested an answer: "What is the cause, nature, and end of an eisteddfod?" No one appearing ready with an answer, Gruffydd ap Nicholas said: "Let the little man in the grey coat answer." Thereupon Dafydd made the following answer: "To remember what has been, to think of what is, and to judge about what shall be."

To be brief, Dafydd ab Edmund carried away the chair at this congress, at which he displayed a power for extemporising verse which was truly surprising, replying to almost every question that was put to him by the president by an englyn or short poem of * four lines, whilst the others when questioned generally replied in prose. Besides gaining the chair he induced the congress to sanction those alterations in the poetical canons of his country which he had so much at heart. It is true that there was one in the assembly who objected to these alterations, namely, Llawdden, who sat with Gruffydd ap Nicholas as judge; his objections, however, were overruled. The innovations introduced by Dafydd ab Edmund into the canon of song amounted to the substitution of an entire new measure, invented by himself, for the old *Englyn Meilwr* stanza, and the modification of two measures called respectively *Cynghawg* and *Hupunt*.

* MS. "or."—[Ed.]

At the same eisteddfod certain alterations of Llawdden in *cynghanedd*, that is, consonancy or alliteration, were carried, and the statutes which he had drawn up with respect to bardic discipline were declared to be binding.

After his triumphs at Carmarthen Dafydd ab Edmund returned to North Wales, where he passed the remainder of his life, respected and honoured, on his estate at Pool Gweppra. Like many a wise, clever man, however, he had a foolish, shallow son. This son, as the Welsh tradition says, after his father's death sold all his paternal property, except only the lake or pool of Gweppra, and speedily falling into great poverty, was at times in the habit of passing the entire day in fishing on the lake. Once during a very hard frost he came to the lake to fish, and a poet, who was of the priestly order, called Hywel Llygad Gwsg, passing by and seeing him, sang the following verses :

" What dost do with the hook in this hard frosty time ?
To hang thee, I'm thinking, would be little crime ;
All thy father's estate thou hast squander'd away,
Save the water in which thou risk'st drowning each day."

" What did you say ? " said the son of Dafydd ab Edmund. " I said," replied Howel Sleepy Eye, " that it would be no sin to hang thee for not keeping a patch of earth to dig, which would have prevented thee being obliged to risk being drowned by going upon the water."

Thirty-seven pieces by Dafydd ab Edmund have been preserved, of which eight have been printed in the " Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru." These last we have seen and perused with attention. Amongst these there is an encomiastic ode to Rhys of Mona, which enjoys great celebrity amongst Welsh scholars, but which has too much of bombast and inflation to

be any great favourite of ours. Of all the pieces which we have seen, written by Dafydd ab Edmund, the one which we most prize is a cowydd to a damsel who had broken her word to him. It is written in the style of Dafydd ab Gwilym, abounds with archness, wit, and poetry, and would have reflected credit on that illustrious bard himself. He had several disciples, the most celebrated of whom were Gutyn Owain and Tudyr Aled, of both of whom we shall have occasion to speak farther on.

Ieuan Gethin flourished about the same time as Dafydd ab Edmund. He was not so celebrated as that poet and was not to be compared with him for quickness of versification, but was far his superior in fancy and originality. It is believed that he was a native of South Wales, but his birthplace and place of residence are not known, nor his rank in life. "Gethin" signifies "dun" or "dismal," so the name "Ieuan Gethin" may be translated "Dismal Jack." It was probably either a nickname or a poetical name. The piece by which he is principally known is an elegy on John the Thatcher, the father of the celebrated poet, Gwilym ap Ieuan Hên, who broke his neck by falling off a roof. This Gwilym * ap Ieuan Hên, or William,† son of John the Aged, was a celebrated poet of South Wales. From the jocular spirit in which the elegy is written, one is almost led to suppose that Ieuan Gethin was the thatcher alluded to in it, that Ieuan Gethin was the father of William, son of Old Jack, and that the accident was imaginary and the elegy a pleasant piece of ridicule on himself. It is hardly to be supposed that a man of any feeling would have treated so melancholy an accident with so much levity, had it really occurred.

William, son of old John, whom we have just

* MS. "Ieuan." † MS. "John."

mentioned, seems to have reached his zenith about the year 1460. He composed an elegy on Gruffydd ap Nicholas of Tre Newydd in Dinefwr, the very same chieftain who presided at the celebrated eisteddfod at Carmarthen at which Dafydd ab Edmund obtained the prize. In this piece William, son of old John, shows that he possessed not the bathos but the art of rising in poetry, for after saying that Gruffydd was a "Justice at the expense of the Saxon," he states that he was lord of seven castles and had seven palaces at his disposal. William's best piece, however, was a cowydd addressed to two prisoners in the castle of Harlech. It contains some truly sublime lines, amongst which are six to the following effect:

> "Ne'er doubt that God His aid will lend,
> Or that the daily bread He'll send;
> He'll break a hole in yonder tower
> And rescue ye from tyrant's power;
> What's difficult to mortal eye
> Seems easy to the Deity."

The poet observes a kind of mysterious reticence about these prisoners, which does not fail to heighten the interest which we take in their fate. He tells us that their names were Owain and Harri, and that they were captured at the close of a dreary battle in which Grey Shenkyn was slain. But he leaves us in the dark with respect to the name of the battle and the person who imprisoned them. They were probably adherents of the house of York, and were imprisoned by order of Queen Margaret.

CHAPTER VIII

Griffith ap Nicholas; Griffith ap Nicholas; more than once we have had occasion to mention this man and shall now speak of him again more particularly. He did much to revive bardism in South Wales and was a bounteous patron of poets, and is said even to have been something of a poet himself. If, however, he had been nothing more than a friend to bardism, a patron of poets, and the writer of a cowydd, we should have contented ourselves with what we have already said about him. The motive which induces us to bestow upon him a particular notice is his having played an important part at a very eventful period of the history of England and Wales. It was he and he alone who gave preponderance to the house of York and caused the scale of the rival family to kick the beam.

In the beginning of the reign of James the First of England a book was written called "The History of Rice ap Thomas." This Rice ap Thomas was the grandson of Griffith ap Nicholas, and in the account of his parentage there is much mention made of Griffith. It is from this work, which, though written in a somewhat pedantic strain, is highly curious and interesting, that we have derived the principal part of what information we possess respecting Griffith ap Nicholas and his grandson likewise, Rice ap Thomas, of whom we shall subsequently have occasion to speak.

"About the two-and-thirtieth of Henry the Sixth,"

says the history in question, " flourished one Griffith ap Nicholas, a man for power, riches, and parentage beyond all the great men in those partes." By " those partes " are meant the counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan. There the influence of Griffith was great indeed, for those counties were strictly Welsh counties, inhabited by the descendants of the ancient Britons, by whom Griffith was considered as the genuine descendant of the kings of South Wales. He traced it up, says the history, to Sir Urien Rheged, King of Gower in Wales, Prince of Murriff in Scotland, Lord of Kidwelly, and Knight of the Round Table to King Arthur. So no wonder he was looked up to by his countrymen, whose admiration for ancient pedigree, always provided that pedigree is British, has ever been proverbial. It was, however, well for Griffith that besides being a person of very ancient pedigree he was a person of huge possessions, for though no doubt the descendant of Urien Rheged would always have been respected, Griffith would hardly have possessed the same influence which he did over the South Welsh, if instead of possessing some hundred thousand acres he had been a small landed proprietor in the valley of Llandovery. As it was, thousands of the genuine sons of South Wales swore by Griffith ap Nicholas and said there was none like him and were always ready to assemble around him whenever he pleased to summon [them], whether he wanted them to do honour to a bardic congress or to make a demonstration tending to prove that the power of South Wales was not altogether extinct, or, indeed, if he merely wished them to partake of his good cheer, his ale and beef, of which he was lavish on all occasions.

At the time of which we are speaking there was a great deal of genuine Welsh power and spirit in South

Wales, on which account Southern differed widely from Northern Wales. There was no independent Welsh power and scarcely any Welsh spirit in the North. There had been plenty of both, but when Glendower fell, all independent Welsh power terminated in North Wales and little Welsh spirit remained, for terrible laws were enacted and carried out by the victor, which as effectually broke the spirit of the people as the tyrannical laws of the Norman conqueror broke the spirit of the Saxons. But South Wales was little affected by the fall of Glendower. Though for a time the greater part of it had apparently submitted to him, they had never joined heartily in his cause, even those who were of genuine Welsh descent, for the great chieftains were jealous of him, and as for the common people, mindful of ancient animosities, they had as much difficulty in believing that any good could come from North Wales as the North Welshers had in believing that any good could come from the South. The South Welsh did not stand by Owen in his adversity, but made terms with the Saxon long before the chieftain fell to rise no more, on which account they were permitted to remain in much the same state as that which they held before the outbreak of the Lord of the Watery Valley. The spirit of the common people had not been whipped, and they had still their great chieftains to whom they looked up as their natural lords and masters, the greatest of which chieftains was certainly Griffith ap Nicholas.

The English government were quite aware of Griffith's importance amongst his countrymen, and in order to convince him that they entertained a proper opinion of it, they made him Lieutenant of the district in which he resided, Captain of Kilgarran, a strong castle in Cardiganshire, and gave him the

commission of Justice of the Peace. What says his bard ?

> " Lieutenant thou o'er plain and ridge,
> Captain o'er battlement and bridge,
> Also a lord, thy country's boast,
> And Justice at the Saxon's cost."

Besides the castle of Kilgarran which he held from the King he was in possession of seven castles of his own and also seven palaces or mansions. What says his bard ?

> " Seven castles high confess thy sway,
> Seven palaces thy hand obey."

His principal residence was at Trenewydd, or Newton, in Dinefwr. Here he lived in barbaric state, something like Owen Glendower at Sycharth, surrounded by his family and adherents. He had three sons, all of them men of great strength and prowess. The first was called Thomas ap Griffith the elder, the second Owen ap Griffith, and the third Thomas ap Griffith the younger. He had also a daughter married to Sir John Scudamore of Herefordshire, who was probably a grandson of that Scudamore who married one of the daughters of Owen Glendower. Though a Lord Lieutenant, Captain of a castle, and Justice of the Peace under the King of England, there is every reason to believe that he was a thorough Welshman, at heart loathed the English sway and detested the English, though he did not exactly say so. He was one of those men who do not permit their lips to betray the brooding of their hearts. None but fools do, if we may believe the bard :

> " The deepest pools in rivers found
> In summer are of softest sound ;
> The sage concealeth what he knows,
> A deal of talk no wisdom shows ;
> The sage is silent as the grave,
> Whilst to his lips the fool is slave."

It is difficult to know exactly the broodings of a man's heart, even whilst living with him on terms of intimacy, but quite impossible to be certain of the broodings of a heart which has ceased to beat for more than four centuries. What were the exact broodings of Griffith's heart it is impossible to say. That he was a thorough Welshman at heart we have ground for supposing, by the countenance which he gave to everything strictly national, by his reviving bardic congresses, wearing the Welsh dress, etc., and that he hated the English was tolerably apparent by his comforting and giving shelter to Welsh thieves who harried the western confines of Herefordshire, and which were generally termed the Marches. When individuals of this description were pursued by the English, apprehended upon his property, and brought before him in his quality of chieftain and Justice of the Peace, he, though he never failed to give the injured parties civil language, invariably dismissed the offenders under pretence that their offences, however flagrant, were not proven, so that it might well be said that he was "Justice of the Peace at the cost of the Saxon." His bard would have expressed himself more to the purpose, had he said "he was Justice of the Peace to the cost of the Saxon."

Whether any other motive besides love of country and hatred to the Saxon may have influenced Griffith in the support he gave to Welsh customs and institutions, and the encouragement which he afforded to those who despoiled the natural enemies [of his] race, it is impossible to say. He may have nourished an idea of becoming King of Wales or a part of it, by taking advantage of the civil wars in which England was beginning to be involved and of the love and admiration which his countrymen entertained for him. But we have no evidence to authorise us

to assert that he ever entertained such a thought, for as has been already said, he never permitted his lips to betray his thoughts. There is every reason to suppose, however, that he never entertained such a thought, at any rate seriously. He may have felt a little inflated when he remembered the ancient glories of his race, or listened to the glorious alliterative line :

"Dy benn yw penn ar bob peth"

from the mouth of his bard William, son of Ivan the Aged. He might even have thought that under certain circumstances he might have made such a king as Wales, or rather South Wales, might have well been proud [of], but he must have been a man too wise and versed in politics not to be aware that the days in which there could be kings of Wales or South Wales were passed never to return, and that the Saxon power must always predominate in Wales. But a person might cherish Welsh institutions without any thought of making Wales independent, might call a meeting of bards at Carmarthen and preside in the chair, without ever dreaming of summoning a Parliament at Carmarthen [and] building there a South Welsh throne ; and a great Welsh chieftain and Justice of the Peace might shelter in his forests, or refuse to convict when brought before him, Welsh freebooters who harried the borders of Herefordshire, and perhaps entertain at supper the strong Welsh thief, Howel of Knockelas, and, when the curds and flummery had been despatched, listen over a deep horn of metheglin to that worthy's account of his plunderings, burnings, and slaughterings up to the very gates of Hereford, or perhaps, under the rose, receive from him as a friendly present six or seven first-rate milch-cows of the Gloucestershire breed—a great Welsh chieftain, we say, and Justice of the Peace

might do all this without harbouring a thought of breaking out into open insurrection against the Saxon and running the risk of losing his land, his commission, and his head. One thing, however, is certain, that whatever Griffith may have thought about becoming King of Wales or South Wales, he never tried to become so, and though he eventually took the field against King Henry the Sixth, it was merely as the ally of one who had certainly more right to the throne than that unfortunate monarch.

The position of Griffith ap Nicholas was in many respects very enviable. He was possessed of immense estates, could boast of the highest pedigree, and was looked up to as a little monarch by the South Welsh, not only by the lower orders but by the smaller landed proprietors, most of whom were connected with him by the ties of relationship. However, no situation can be enviable without awakening envy, and envy produces hostility, the effects of which to the obnoxious object are seldom very agreeable. On account of his greatness and influence Griffith had several powerful enemies, who did all they could to harass and annoy him. These were certain great Norman neighbours of his, who hated him, either on account of his large possessions or his influence amongst his countrymen. Powerful indeed they were, for they were no less personages than Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, and Richard, Duke of York, who began the contest for the Crown with Henry the Sixth. All these great men were neighbours of Griffith and had continual disputes with him about property or privilege, or their followers with his adherents about questions of right and wrong. Buckingham possessed large property in Breconshire, and was lord of the castle of Brecknock. Jasper possessed the greater part of

Pembrokeshire and was earl of the county besides; whilst Richard as heir of Mortimer possessed the great Mortimer property on the Marches, on which account his eldest son, subsequently Edward the Fourth, was called the Earl of March. O, endless were the disputes between these noblemen and their people with the great Welsh chieftain and those who clung to him. Griffith, however, invariably took his own part and that of his people. "You have got a tract of land on the Marches," says Richard, "which belongs to me, and the fellow whom you protect and who is indeed your tenant, robbed my marchman, Owen Simpson, of eleven kine and one calf." "The property which you claim," replies Griffith, "belongs to me. As for Howel of Knockelas committing a robbery, the thing is impossible, for there is not a more honest man in Wales. As for Owen Simpson, he lately appeared before me and made his complaint, and I civilly told him to go about his business, for how is it possible to believe a fellow even [on] oath, whose name manifests that he is neither Welsh nor English?" "Your ruffian, Huw ap Morgan ap Meredith," says the Duke of Buckingham, "has murdered my gentleman, Anthony de la Pont; I demand that the ruffian is hanged." "Your Grace's ruffian, Anthony de la Pont," replies Griffith, "attempted to force the daughter of my gentleman, Huw ap Morgan ap Meredith ap Ivan mab Gronwy ap Hoel Fawr, and my gentleman slew the ruffian." "Your people are continually insulting mine, and you yourself are keeping me out of my right," says the Earl of Pembroke; "I am the leading man of South Wales and the Captaincy of Kilgarran properly belongs to me." "I have nothing to say to your Lordship, nothing whatever," says Griffith ap Nicholas, "save that peradventure your Lordship is mistaken. Your

Lordship no doubt is a very great gentleman and a right worthy gentleman. Nevertheless, a time may come—however—— "

" A fo doeth efe a dau,
Annoeth ni reol enau."

" The sage is silent as the grave,
But of his lips the fool is slave."

Now if Griffith ap Nicholas hated one being more than another, and Griffith, like every man who has command over his tongue, was a tolerably good hater, it was this Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, and if Jasper, a proud, imperious noble, hated anybody on earth it was Griffith ap Nicholas. Betwixt Griffith and the Dukes of Buckingham and York there was mere common rivalry. The Dukes no doubt hated Nicholas and Nicholas hated the Dukes, but the hatred between them was a common kind of hatred; not so the hatred between Griffith and Jasper. The Earl of Pembroke was not a mere Norman or English noble, whom Griffith, when he spoke of him to his countrymen, could denominate contemptuously a Saxon. If Griffith had the blood of Roderick the Great in his veins, Jasper had that blood too, and as plenteously as Griffith, and yet the proudest Norman baron or duke could not call Jasper a mere Welshman, as they could and did Griffith ap Nicholas. Both Welsh and Normans must respect Jasper's pedigree. Where was there a prouder one in Britain? By his father's side he was descended from Roderick the Great, by his mother's from Charlemagne. In a word, he was the son of Owen Tudor by Catherine of France and England, the widow of Henry the Fifth. So if Griffith boasted of his British blood, Jasper boasted of his too. They were not only rivals for territory but in genealogy, and genealogy of the same

kind. And it was on account of their common genealogy that their mutual hatred was so particularly bitter. With respect to power they were nearly matched. Each possessed certain advantages which the other did not. Griffith was far better acquainted with Welsh language, habits, and prejudices than the Earl of Pembroke, who was born in France and educated at the English court. All the Welsh of Carmarthen and Cardigan were for him. Even amongst the Welsh of Pembrokeshire he was far more popular than the Earl, notwithstanding that he had considerable influence amongst them. But then all the Flemings, English, and Normans of Pembrokeshire, who formed nearly one-half of the population, were for the Earl, for whom also were all his great neighbours, the Barons of Glamorgan and Monmouth, the Duke of Buckingham and His Grace of York—the latter for a time at least—and then, to crown all, Jasper had on his side his half-brother, King Henry the Sixth, for the Earl of Pembroke being son of Catherine of France was brother uterine of the successor of Harry the Fifth. What with Flemings, Normans, and Welsh of Pembrokeshire and grand neighbours, the Earl had nearly as much influence in Wales as Griffith ap Nicholas, whilst at court, where the mere Welshman was looked upon with some dislike, his influence was far greater. Such were the respective positions of the two rivals. So no wonder Griffith ap Nicholas hated the Earl of Pembroke to the bottom of that very deep pool, his bosom. And no wonder that the Earl of Pembroke hated the Welsh chief.

Thus stood matters between Griffith ap Nicholas, the Earl of Pembroke and the Dukes. Besides being on bad terms with these potentates, Griffith had a quarrel, arising out of questions of property and

privilege, with Henry, Duke of Warwick, so that nobody can say that he had not plenty of quarrels, and first-rate ones too, on his hands. His great enemy, however, was the Earl of Pembroke, who by his influence at court at length caused the patent for the Captaincy of Kilgarran to be taken from Griffith and bestowed upon himself. Not satisfied with obtaining this advantage he entered into a league and covenant with the three Dukes and two judges or justices of Herefordshire, the aim of which was the entire ruin of Griffith. What says the bard ?—

> " Three mighty Dukes, with envy fir'd,
> And judges two 'gainst thee conspir'd."

The Earl of Pembroke may be said to have stood for one of the Dukes mentioned in the above couplet, that is, for Henry, Duke of Warwick, who does not seem to have taken much hand in the business. The Earl, however, and two of the Dukes conspired against Griffith, whose property perhaps they hoped to share amongst them. The two judges who are said to have conspired with them were probably influenced by much more honourable motives than the nobles in seeking the downfall of the chieftain. Griffith had been accused to them of comforting and assisting Welsh thieves who harried the English border. So they did but their duty in trying to bring him to justice. Griffith, however, seems to have been a tolerable match for the whole of them. What says William, son of Ivan the Aged ?—

> " Thou show'dst to them a dauntless brow
> And to retreat they were not slow."

The way which the Dukes and justices adopted to ruin Griffith was the following. The justices drew up a regular complaint against the chieftain as a

harbourer and encourager of robbers. This complaint the Dukes and the Earl of Pembroke laid before King Henry the Sixth's council and backed [it] with all their influence, the result being that a royal commission was granted for the purpose of enquiring into the matter, at the head of which commission was a certain Lord Whitney. His Lordship made the best of his way to South Wales. His adventures in the country of Griffith ap Nicholas are given in the history mentioned at the commencement of this chapter. Surely no commission before or since ever met with adventures so extraordinary. The writer of the history relates them on the authority of a certain Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, a man who had studied the British tongue and was deeply versed in British matters. The following is an abridgment of them :

Lord Whitney and his train reached Carmarthenshire without any difficulty. Coming to Llandiffry, probably Llandovery, a town about twenty miles from Carmarthen, they refreshed themselves and then proceeded. A mile or two beyond that place, on the top of a hill, they were met by Griffith ap Nicholas, having four or five in his company " raggedly attired and poorelier hors'd." Griffith, after saluting the commissioners in a very humble manner, requested to be allowed to attend them for their better guidance. Having obtained their consent, he conducted them to Abermarlais Castle, where Thomas ap Griffith the younger, " a stout and hardie gentleman, meeting his father with a hundred tall men, bravelie mounted, descended there from his horse, and kissed his father's stirrup and desired to receive his commandes," on observing which Lord Whitney began to fear that Griffith ap Nicholas would not pay much heed to his commission. When they came to Newton, Owen ap

Griffith, the second son, "saluted them in a far braver equipage, having two hundred horse attending, well mann'd and well arm'd." This Owen had much of his father's subtlety, and having learnt that the commissioners had come with no friendly intentions towards his father, determined to steal the commission. At Abergwilly, a small village this side of Carmarthen, "Thomas ap Griffith the elder, a man of a sweete, milde, and gentle disposition (notwithstanding that he was the best swordsman and most noted duellist in Wales) presentes his services, first to his father and then to the commissioners; he had five hundred tall men following him, and they well disciplin'd, whom before in good order on foote he leades even till they came to the commissioners' lodgings, and there Griffith ap Nicholas left them for that night, commaundinge his three sonnes to attend them at supper and to see them fairlie entreated." "Lord Whitney and the rest now wished themselves safe at home and their commission at an end, yet fearing lest he should give them the slip they send for the maiour and sheriffes to whom they showe their commission, requiring them by virtue thereof to be their assistant in the attaching of Griffith ap Nicholas, which they promised to obey, appointing the next morning for the fittest season." One of the sheriffs, observing that Lord Whitney, after reading the commission, "clapp'd it up in the sleeve of his cloake," informed Owen ap Griffith * of the fact, who determined to take advantage of it. To supper they went, and the sons of Griffith having intoxicated the commissioners, Owen steals the commission out of Lord Whitney's sleeve. On the following morning the commissioners go to the shire hall and send for Griffith ap Nicholas, who, making his appearance, asks humbly

* MS. "Nicholas."

his Lordship to proceed in a fair and legal manner and to read his commission. Lord Whitney, putting his hand into the sleeve of the cloak, cannot find it, "whereat Griffith ap Nicholas starts up in a fury, clapping his hat upon his head and looking about him upon his sons and friends, 'What,' says he, 'have we cozeners and cheaters come hither to abuse the Kinges Majesties power and to abuse his true-hearted subjects?' Then turning about to the commissioners he rappes out a greate oath and sayes ere the next day were at an end he would have them up all for traytours and impostors and so commands handes to be laid upon them, and that they should be carried to prison." The commissioners make great entreaties for their lives, "but nothing would serve the turne unless the Lord Whitney would be bound by oath to put on Griffith ap Nicholas's blew coate and weare his cognizance, and soe goe up to the King to acknowledge his owne offences and to justifie the said Griffith's proceedings, which, to preserve himself from danger, he willingly undertook and accordingly performed." What was the result the author could never learn.

The above account of Lord Whitney's commission, for which the writer of the history in question was indebted to Bishop Andrews, is no doubt highly entertaining, but it must certainly be taken with much qualification. There is some truth in it blended with no small amount of fiction. In some of the details there are traces of popular myths which are probably more ancient than either Nineveh or Babylon. The three sons of Griffith who appear successively, the first with one hundred tall men, the second with two, the third with a goodly company of five hundred, put us wonderfully in mind of the three old men, the second older than the first, and the third far older than the second, whom we have read about in one of

Sinbad's voyages and also among the Persian or rather Hindustani "Tales of a Parrot," in the singular story of the immense grains of wheat found by the peasant in the subterranean magazine. Then again, the account of Owen's stealing the commission seems to be merely a pastoral version of a tale which may be found in connection with various times and places; for example, it is clearly identical with the Chester tale of the Protestant landlady of the Feathers Inn, and the popish Doctor Barnes, who, on his way to Ireland with a commission from Popish Mary to persecute the Protestants of that country, has, according to the tale, his commission stolen from him by the landlady, who puts a pack of cards in its place. Whether Lord Whitney's going to London to the King, dressed in Griffith ap Nicholas's "blewe coat" and wearing his cognizance, to acknowledge his own transgressions and to justify the chieftain is a modification of some old myth we know not, but of one thing we are certain, which is, that we pay no credit to it. That a gentleman, to say nothing of a nobleman, would, for the sake of life have consented to do anything of the kind is impossible. What would life have been worth after submitting to such ignominy? O, no! Had Griffith said, "I'll hang you unless you put on my coat and justify me," his Lordship would have assuredly answered, "Hang me and be ——," and had the Welshman ordered him to be executed, would have calmly submitted to his fate, repeating whilst the cord was being put round his neck the immortal lines:

> "Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,
> Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas."

Nevertheless, though some of the minor details are false, there can be no doubt that the grand fact

is true, namely, that Lord Whitney and other commissioners were sent into Wales for the purpose of investigating the conduct of Griffith, and that the subtle chieftain, without flying in the face of government, contrived to send them back without effecting anything satisfactory.

CHAPTER IX

THE conspiracy of the Dukes and Earl against Griffith ap Nicholas did not last long; within a little time they had other matters to occupy their attention of far greater importance. The old grudge between the houses of Lancaster and York was rapidly assuming the character of a quarrel only to be determined by either party having recourse to arms. The Duke of York claimed the crown and King Henry refused to give it up. And who can blame him, for though he was the grandson of the bad Bolingbroke, he was the son of a mighty king and had been a crowned king himself from his infancy. York prepared for war. The chances were decidedly in his favour. He was a great warrior himself, had numerous friends, amongst whom was the redoubtable Warwick, and above all he had such a family of warrior and heroic sons to back him as no father ever had, with the exception of the old King of Troy. The King also prepared for war; he was no warrior himself, it is true, but then he had a wife who was one; [one] too, who, though she had committed certain peccadillos in halcyon days, stood manfully by her husband when the storm raged fiercely, and, glory to her, often made his foemen scamper before her. He had also friends amongst the great barons, not so numerous as those of York, but powerful friends, some of them proper men with thin hands like Clifford; and then not least his gallant half-brother,

the chap who had come out of the same royal French womb, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, who said, speaking most choice Norman : " I will come to you and tolerably well attended. I can bring all the Flemings with me and perhaps some Welshers. I know I can bring one, a strange, harping, rhyming fellow whom they call Lewis Glyn Cothi, who now and then visits me at Tenby out of the heart of Carmarthenshire, plays on a harp of three strings, and recites odes in most barbarous Breton. Him I can promise you, for he has sworn by the nails of God that my friends shall be his friends and that if his own brother-in-law were my foe, he would try to stab him, as Dafydd Gam tried to stab Owen Glendower. I am sure of him and no doubt he will do great service, for he speaks right valiant words. Were it not for that confounded Griffith ap Nicholas, I could bring with me all the men of South Wales." Thus the quarrel between the King and the Duke had broken out, which quarrel broke the conspiracy of the Dukes and the Earl of Pembroke against Griffith ap Nicholas, for the Duke of Buckingham sided with the Duke of York against the King, and the Earl sided with the King his brother [and] was, of course, at daggers drawn with the Dukes.

For some time after the commencement of the Wars of the Roses, Griffith kept aloof, siding with neither party. The Welsh, were, however, busy on the Marches and harrying for their own advan[tage]. Philip ap Howel of Knockelas became more notorious and was particularly busy on the confines of Salop ; complaints were again made to Griffith, but without any effect—no redress could be obtained. At length, both though absent were tried and found guilty before William Borley and Thomas Corbet and other justices of King Henry the Sixth, Philip ap Howel as a plunderer and freebooter, Griffith ap Nicholas as an

aider, abetter, harbourer, and comforter of the said Philip ap Howel, and both were declared outlaws. Shortly after his outlawry, Griffith making his appearance at Hereford, he was seized by the constable and townspeople. His son-in-law, Sir John Scudamore, interfered and rescued him, and Griffith retreated to his hills. The situation of the chieftain was now becoming critical. It was necessary to take some decided course; his mind was soon made up; he sent messengers to the Duke of York, who soon arranged matters between them, and Griffith donned the white rose and began to make preparations for joining the Duke at the head of all his people.

But now ensues the dreadful Wakefield. The Duke's army is utterly broken, himself and his young son Rutland taken and put to death. O, there was no mock humanity in those days, no currying favour with your enemies, binding up their wounds and hoping that they will take no harm, whilst you leave your own mangled friends to perish uncared for on the field of battle. The cause of York seems lost. The Earl of March, who on the death of his father assumes the title of Edward the Fourth, is at Gloucester, with a small army it is true, but he is threatened by the Earl of Pembroke, who is advancing with a large army, for the Earl has raised a mighty host; all the Flemings are with him and numerous companies of Welshmen too, not merely composed of his own vassals, for Lewis Glyn Cothi has come out of the country of his ancient enemy, even out of Shire Car, and has brought a hundred or two with him, and the Earl's father, even the celebrated Owen Tudor, has come from Anglesea with a thousand North Welsh to assist his own son and his stepson, the child of Catherine of France. So the cause of York looks desperate indeed. But Edward shows himself equal

to the emergency. He appeals to the march-men: "I have the blood of Mortimer in my veins. Come and help me now." All the march-men love the blood [of] Mortimer. They respond to the appeal and flock to him by thousands. Edward does more. He sends messengers to his friends, who live up farther in Wales. "We'll come," say the friends, and so they do. He does more—he sends to the great Welsh chieftain, even Griffith ap Nicholas, his father's old enemy and lately his own. "I'll come," says Griffith, "I'll be with him in a week." "You must be with him in less time than that," says the messenger, "for ere a week the Earl of Pembroke will be upon him." "Hey, what's that?" says Griffith; "the Earl of Pembroke, did you say? I'll be with him before I sleep. Hollo! Owen Holl, Thomas the younger, up with the banner, set the three ravens a-flying. The Earl of Pembroke, oh!"

The bard has said that the deepest pool in the river is the most silent in the summer month. Aye, so it is, William, son of Ivan the Aged, but what is it *mis gauaf*, what is it in the winter month, William, son of Ivan the Aged? Why, a howling whirlpool, and such was that deep pool, the breast of Griffith ap Nicholas, when he heard that there was a chance of meeting his old enemy in the field. "Up with the banner, the old banner of Rice and Urien; set the three ravens flying!" Before he has slept he is at Gloucester with his two younger sons, for the eldest is abroad in Burgundy. Yes, there is Griffith, old Griffith, for seventy winters have passed over his head. There he is, with Owen and young Thomas and Philip ap Howel of Knockelas and seven hundred men, all he can collect on the sudden emergency. He has come to Gloucester; he has joined Edward, who by the day of battle has a gallant army ready of four-

and-twenty thousand men, all burning to avenge the Duke and little Rutland. Out they march from Gloucester and meet the foe on the plain near Mortimer's Cross. On comes the foe. What a force! thirty thousand at the least, led by the great Earl, Jasper, son of Catherine of France, brother by the womb to King Henry the Sixth, by the celebrated Owen Tudor who married the widow of the victor of Agincourt, and many earls and captains, amongst the latter Lewis Glyn Cothi, who leads the company he has collected from the neighbourhood of the Five Saints and who inspirits his men by brave words and swears that he will not leave the field as long as the great Earl keeps it. The battle begins; first the shouting; flights of arrows and bolts from long-bow and cross-bow; then hotter work, nearer play; clashing of faulchions, cleaving of shields and helmets, blood flowing in torrents, a very deadly fight hand to hand. An hour passes and the Yorkists begin to yield. "En avant, mes filz!" says the great Earl Owen Tudor, shaking his gauntlet at the flinching foe, and Lewis Glyn Cothi uses brave words. Yes, the Yorkists are beaten; they run, they run, all but one band which presses forward, making seemingly (what madness!) towards the banner of the great Earl. Now, red roses, if you can but make that band run, the day is your own. Aye, but it is no easy thing to make that band turn round, and see! the rest of the Yorkists, who were running, are become ashamed and are reforming behind that band and about its flanks. However, thank God, the leader of the band is struck down by an arrow. Yes, their leader, that rather lusty old fellow with the grey hair and breastplate over a grey cloak, his fall will stop them. Yes, they stop. But see! the old man sits up on the field and says something to that handsome young

man and also to that strong-looking fellow in buckram with a morion, who looks more like a * thief than an honest man, but who deals terrible blows. See how the old man points to the great Earl's banner and see! see how the band presses on, faster than ever, and how the rest of the Yorkists press after them, leaving the old man on his chine with his fists thrust forward in the direction of the great Earl's banner. Yes, Griffith ap Nicholas was struck down, but he sat up and said to his son: "Now, Thomas the younger, lead the men on, lead them right against the banner of my foe and strike it down, even as your father is stricken down. And you, Philip ap Howel of Knockelas, whom I have saved from the gallows a hundred times and owing to whom I have been forced to mix myself up in the quarrels of the Saxon, aid and comfort my son, even as I have aided and comforted you." And Thomas the younger and Howel of Knockelas, dashing tears from their eyes, encourage the men, who rush on with a shout, whilst the Yorkists follow. There is a deadly shock, but the Lancastrians yield and the banner of the great Earl is taken, and the first to lay hands on it is Philip ap Howel of Knockelas, who nevertheless falls, cleft through morion and brain by the great Earl's standard-bearer, whose arm is the next moment hewn off by Thomas ap Griffith † the younger, who seizes the standard and retains it, "and at the head of his men pursues the Earl of Pembroke even unto flight." Yes, the great Earl flies and Lewis Glyn Cothi, seeing his patron flying, does not linger behind but betakes himself to wild Wales, where he sculks amidst rocks and wildernesses, "sitting," to use his own wonderful expression, "between the ears of the stag." And the Lancastrian host flies, leaving, however, thousands of

* MS. "the." † MS. "Nicholas."

dead on the field and many prisoners, amongst whom is Sir Owen Tudor, the husband of Catherine of France, brother uterine of Henry the Sixth, whose head is almost immediately struck off by order of Edward beneath Mortimer's Cross, for those were not the days of mock humanity, when commanders curried favour with their enemies, binding up their wounds, whilst leaving their own mangled followers to perish on the field.

Yes, the battle, the grand battle of Mortimer's Cross is won by the Yorkists,* or rather by Griffith ap Nicholas and his sturdy Welshmen. Thomas, after chasing the Earl with his followers, returns to the part of the field where he had left his father. The old man was lying on his back apparently dead. As they approached, however, he again sat up. "Well?" said he in a faint voice, looking at his son and followers. "The Earl is chased from the field," said Thomas the younger, "and this is his banner," and he waved the flag slowly over the old man's head. Griffith looked at the flag for a moment and then, saying, "Welcome, Death, since honour and victorie maketh for us," he sank back and expired.

* MS. "Lancastrians."

CHAPTER X

Ieuan Deulwyn was a bard and friend of Ryce ap Thomas, whose praises he delighted to sing. Perhaps the reader does not know who Ryce ap Thomas was; if so, the more shame for him. Ryce ap Thomas was the grandson of the Gruffydd ap Nicholas, Justice of the Peace and lord of seven castles and seven palaces, who held the eisteddfod at Carmarthen in 1450. Nothing more? Yes, something more. Ryce ap Thomas was the person to whom Harry, Duke of Richmond, was indebted for the crown of England. Ryce ap Thomas at the head of "all the Ryces" joined Henry at Carmarthen, just at the moment that he was about to turn and with his handful of dispirited and frightened followers to make the best of his way back to his half-dozen fishing smacks in Milford Haven. So without Ryce ap Thomas there would have been no battle of Bosworth Field, no Henry the Seventh and Eighth—or if there had been, probably very different from those personages called so in our history—possibly no pulling down of rooks' nests, no Reformation. Perhaps no person born in Britain ever exercised greater influence over its destinies than Ryce ap Thomas, and before speaking of "Jack of the two Groves," that is, Ieuan Deulwyn interpreted, we wish to relate something more of the history of Ryce ap Thomas.

During a space of about forty years, embracing the concluding and commencing parts of the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries, flourished in South Wales the great chieftain Ryce ap Thomas, the grandson of the celebrated Griffith ap Nicholas of whom we have already spoken. As we shall shortly have occasion to mention various bards who feasted in the halls and sang the praises of this man, who like his ancestor had a considerable taste for poetry, we shall take the liberty of laying before the reader the principal events of his life, gathered from what is called " A Short View " of his life, written during the reign of James the Sixth by some member or connection of the Ryce family, which contains much that is curious and remarkable, and of which we have spoken in the chapter devoted to Griffith ap Nicholas. With these events we shall occasionally interweave some observations and reflections of our own.

This Ryce was the third son of Thomas, eldest born of Griffith, the crafty, turbulent, and powerful. The earlier part of his youth was spent abroad with his father, who, unwilling to be embroiled in the civil wars of " The Roses," had taken service under Philip, Duke of Burgundy, with whom he became a favourite, chiefly owing to his skill in warlike exercises, particularly the use of the sword, at which he had few equals. The Duke, one day observing the graceful bearing of the youngster Ryce at the manege,* conceived as strong a liking for him as for his father, caused him to be educated along with his own son, the Duke of Charolois, until he acquired every kind of knightly accomplishment, and finally bestowed upon him the commission of Captain of Horse. An amour in which the elder Ryce had engaged with a lady, who was a near relation of the Duke, was the cause of the father and son's leaving the court of Burgundy and

* Riding-school.—[Ed.]

returning to Wales, where Thomas, finding his father dead, at once took possession of the family domains and assumed the chieftaincy. After enjoying his estates and dignity some time he was slain by a gentleman's servant, whose master he had killed in a duel, for though a man of the sweetest disposition and a hater of civil wars and bloodshed, such was the perversity of his fate that scarcely a week passed without his being engaged in some desperate private fray. The circumstances of his death were too extraordinary to be passed over without particular mention. After a hard struggle, he had killed his man, and then having retired to a short distance had cast himself on the ground with his face downward, where he lay panting and exhausted. The servant of the slain gentleman, observing him in this condition, went up, and running his sword through his body, exclaimed, " Take that for killing my master ! " Thomas, feeling himself mortally wounded, writhed round, and looking at the servant, said, " Friend, had my face been up instead of down, I had been safe, for you durst not have looked me in the eyes." Then giving a great groan, he expired.

Young Ryce succeeded his father in the chieftaincy, his two elder brothers, Morgan and Dafydd, having fallen in the civil wars. We have a striking example, in the fate of these young men, of the tendency of civil wars to snap asunder the nearest family ties. They had embraced different sides, and from having been loving brothers had become inveterate enemies. Immediately after the battle of Tewkesbury, in which the real Lancastrian cause was ruined for ever, Morgan, the elder brother, who was a determined Yorkist, besieged Jasper, the Earl of Pembroke, and his nephew, young Richmond, in Pembroke; and would probably have taken them and cut off both

their heads, had not his brother Dafydd, an equally determined Lancastrian, come to the rescue with a large but tumultuary body of Lancastrians. Shouting the cry of Lancaster, Dafydd and his rout set upon his brother and the Yorkists, drove them from before the castle, pursued them with great slaughter for a considerable distance, and then returning, escorted the Earl and Duke to Tenby, placed them on board ship and saw them set sail for France. It was owing to a kind providence that these two exasperated brothers did not fall by each other's hands; fall they eventually did, but in different petty skirmishes, the fall of the one occurring shortly after that of the other. Both were desperate fighting men. Morgan especially was a noted champion, of whose feats, particularly of horsemanship, the most extraordinary tales were told for a considerable period after his death.

The succession of young Ryce to his family domains was within a few years subsequent to the permanent establishment of Edward the Fourth on the English throne. Everything was then tolerably quiet in Wales. Ryce on first becoming a chieftain had many difficulties to contend against. He, however, quickly surmounted them all by the wise and prudent manner in which he conducted himself. Old enemies of his family rose up against him, but these either quickly became his friends or ceased to annoy him, for he never incensed them, though he took particular care to let them know that he was not afraid of them *—a mode of conduct worthy of every one's imitation under similar circumstances. Ryce, though a very young man, appears to have possessed wisdom not always found in the old. His wisdom was no doubt partly innate, but there can be little doubt that a great deal of it was acquired in the

* MS. "him."

excellent school in which his earlier youth had been passed. He was no home-bred scion, but had spent that period of life when the character is generally sure to be formed for good or bad, in the court of a great and warlike prince. In no part of his conduct did Ryce give greater proof of his wisdom than in the company which he kept. He kept, with perhaps the exception of one individual who will presently be specified, the very best company that a young man in his circumstances could keep; not exactly high-born individuals, but men of station, talent, and sagacity, the very description of men who were likely to help him on to a much higher station than even that which he occupied. These were, as we learn from "the view" of his life, John, Bishop of St. David's, a learned, grave, and reverend prelate; Robert, Abbot of Talley, John, Prior of Carmarthen, two sound politicians; Morgan of Kidwely, "a man deeply read in the common lawes of the realme"; and Richard Griffith and Arnold Butler, "two auncient captaines, verie famous in those parts for their skill in soulderie." Certainly these were the very best companions that a young man like Ryce in high station, who would naturally [want] to assume a still higher one, could have chosen. A young man like him could have chosen what associates he thought proper; he could have the highest, the lowest, or the most talented society; he showed his wisdom by choosing the most talented. Some young men in his position would have chosen what is called the highest society, have associated with Dukes and Earls—but how would he have been benefited by so doing? He would hardly have learnt anything useful from Dukes and Earls, and have probably ruined himself by attempting to compete with them in magnificence. Many young men in his position

would have associated with the low and profligate, with dicers, cock-fighters, drinkers, but what would Ryce have gained by such company save eventually a broken constitution, ruined finances, his own contempt, and what would have been yet worse, the contempt of the abjects who surrounded him? No, young Ryce associated with people from whom he could derive immense advantage, and by means of whom he could lose nothing. They were glad to visit him in his hall, but their visits were not expensive ones, and he learnt from them that which was more precious to him than gold. From the Bishop he derived some learning—not much, but a little learning at that time was a very graceful thing; from the Abbot and Prior he learnt much of the great art of politics, learnt to distinguish the signs of the times, so as to have a pretty good guess which side or party was likely to be in the ascendant; from Morgan of Kidwely some conception of the laws of his country —some knowledge of the laws of his country is at all times a good defensive or offensive weapon to a gentleman—and from the two "auncient" captains he improved greatly what knowledge of the art military he might have picked up in Burgundy; for those two men, Richard Griffith and Arnold Butler, had served with distinction on the Yorkist side during that struggle in which as hard battles were fought as the world has ever seen, and as much military talent displayed as during any period of Roman history. If Ryce was wise in associating with the ecclesiastics and the man of law, he was doubly so in becoming hand and glove with the two ancient captains and obtaining from them all the instruction in their art which he possibly could; for a respectable knowledge of the military science was likely to be of the greatest value to a young man like Ryce, living in the times

in which he did, more especially if he had resolved, as there is every probability that he had, to become the first man in Wales.

And now a few words with regard to the individual who it is not apparent was quite so an unexceptionable acquaintance for young Ryce as any of the others. This individual, whose Christian name was Robin, but who was generally termed Robin of the Dale, from the place of his residence, was one of those people who pretend to predict future events by reading the stars; in other words, he was an astrologer. Whether Ryce derived any benefit from his acquaintance with this man is a question, but one thing is certain, namely, that he derived no harm. It is said that he never undertook anything of importance without being guided by the advice of the astrologer. If so, Robin, however he attained his knowledge, must have been a wise man indeed, for Ryce never did a foolish action in his life.

After these individuals had enjoyed Ryce's friendship for some time, they consulted together how they could best advance him in life; and the result of their consultation was a determination to bring about a match between him and a certain young lady, by name Eva, one of the co-heiresses of a certain Henrie ap Gwillim of Court Henrie; and this match they contrived to bring about. That it was a match highly desirable for young Ryce no one will doubt when told that she was rich, virtuous, and beautiful, and that her father was an hereditary enemy of the house of Ryce and a mortal foe of young Ryce's father, with whom he had fought more than one desperate duel. So by bringing about a union between young Ryce and her, they not only procured for the young chieftain a rich and handsome bride, but turned an hereditary foe into a warm friend and father-in-law. Truly,

young Ryce had shown wonderful sagacity in the choice of his friends. The friends which he had gathered round him procured him a first-rate wife; what greater service could they have rendered him? A man is never thoroughly well off till he has a good wife; never thoroughly ruined till he has a bad one.

Shortly after his marriage Ryce began to play a very remarkable part in his native district, the government of which he took almost entirely into his own hands. One of his first acts was the instituting of certain festival days for the holding of public sports. On these days people, in obedience to his summons, assembled at a particular place from all parts, the men to contend with each other in athletic games, such as "running, quoiting, leaping, wrestling," and the women to dance in large booths erected for the purpose. In all the diversions Ryce took a prominent part, running, quoiting, leaping, and wrestling with the men, and dancing with the women, and by his briskness and affability gaining the hearts of all.

The next thing which he accomplished was the introducing a system of military discipline amidst his people. He trained them to arms and regular fighting, chiefly by means of the assistance of his two trusty friends, Richard Griffith and Arnold Butler, the two old captains already mentioned. It does not appear that he tried to make foot-soldiers of his people, but rather to form out of them a numerous and efficient body of cavalry. He encouraged all his tenants to keep horses, and instituted horse-[races] in which they might display their horsemanship and the speed of their steeds. He carried his wish into execution, and in a little time was able to place himself at the head of nineteen hundred of his tenants, each trained to fight on horseback and each

mounted on a horse trained for battle. But this was only a small part of the force which at last he could gather around him. He supplied all freeholders with horses, who were willing to make over to him small patches of land; and the consequence of his doing so was that besides his own ancestral domains he had patches of land all over South Wales, and besides his own kinsfolk and tenantry, a set of retainers scattered all over the country, at all times ready and eager to gather round him on horseback. The aggregate force which he could bring into the field was computed to amount to nearly five thousand mounted men.

It is impossible not to admire the sagacity displayed in these proceedings of Ryce. He instituted festival days on which the men were to practise athletic games, and by so doing render their bodies supple and hardy, such as the bodies of men whom he was resolved to make soldiers of for his own advantage ought to be; but he took especial care that those festivals, in which the men received their first lessons in warlike training, should have the concurrence of the women, by erecting booths for them on the sporting-ground in which they might dance. So no wonder these festivals became eminently popular, more especially as Ryce himself ran and wrestled with the men and danced with the women. He set about drilling and training people for soldiers, but he was not so unwise as to try to make foot-soldiers of them. Had he done so, it is probable that very few would have attended his meetings, at any rate that very few would have attended with much alacrity. No, but he set to work to raise cavalry, and of course experienced no difficulty, for where is the young man, or the old man either, who is not willing to become a soldier, provided

you promise to mount him upon a horse? Had Ryce taken to training foot-soldiers instead of horse, there can be little doubt that instead of the five thousand men, whom by following the course he did he could now lead into the field, he could scarcely have drawn after him as many hundreds.

His chief aim, we may say his only one, in instituting these games and training, was to acquire popularity and power. And he certainly succeeded. He became the idol of the commonalty and the most powerful man of South Wales. Yet in all he did he acted so discreetly that he does not appear to have excited either suspicion or enmity. His powerful neighbours do not appear to have been jealous of him, and the Court took no umbrage at his proceedings. Indeed, Edward the Fourth showed him many marks of favour, and seemed to be proud of possessing such a subject; for Ryce, either by letters or by means of his friends, contrived to convince that monarch that he was perfectly loyal, was at all times willing to shed every drop of his blood in his defence, and that in all he did he had his sovereign's honour and the security of the country solely in view.

It was perhaps well for Ryce that at the time of which we are speaking he had for his sovereign a man who, after braining all his foes with his battle-axe, sat down with a determination to eat, drink, and be merry, and to cast fear and suspicion to the wind. It was well for Ryce that instead of Edward the Fourth, triumphant and free from care, he had not evil, suspicious Henry the Fourth to deal with, for in that event his games and trainings would probably have been brought to an abrupt conclusion, and his head stuck up above the gate of Carmarthen; and it was perhaps well for Edward that long before Ryce began to discipline men and horses, he had won Barnet

and Tewkesbury, and that he was firmly established on the throne for life; for it is by no means certain that if Edward had been in distress and extremity he could have depended on Ryce and his levies for succour; by no means certain that Ryce would not have [taken] part against him, after having made a bargain with the foe most advantageous to himself. As it was, Ryce was a loyal subject for Edward, an exceedingly loyal subject, knowing full well that he would derive no benefit by being disloyal to him, but, on the contrary, inevitable ruin. By training men he had nothing in view against Edward the Fourth; he merely hoped that his trained cavalry might be turned to good account in a certain contingency, which he expected would happen after the death of Edward the Fourth, who, though a young man, was already swollen and bloated from excesses; and that by means of them he, Ryce, might become what he was bent upon becoming sooner or later—the first man in Wales.

As a proof how cautious Ryce was, not to do or to sanction anything which savoured of disrespect to the firmly established sovereign, the following act may suffice. Once after dinner a certain Ryce Nanmor, one of the bards who were in the habit of coming to his hall and singing his praises and those of his ancestors, got up and began to recite a spirited cowydd:

> "Y brenin biau'r ynys
> Ond sy o ran i Syr Rys"—
>
> "The King owns all the island wide
> Except the part where Ryce doth bide"—

sang the bard. Ere, however, he could proceed any farther, Ryce ordered him to be seized and hauled away to the tower. "He is singing treason," said

Ryce, " praising me at the expense of my gracious [King], whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. Before this time to-morrow I'll hang him on the highest tower of Trenewydd, that is, unless he can satisfactor[il]y explain what he has said, for I will sanction no treason." So the bard was hauled away, put in the keep, and left to his reflections. On the morrow he was brought before Ryce, who asked him sternly what he meant by the couplet which he had sung, for he had never heard a couplet in his life which had a more treasonable sound. " I am sorry your Lordship thinks so," said the bard humbly. " I am sure I had no intention to speak treason, but the contrary. I thought I had composed a right loyal couplet, and I hope your Lordship will think so too, if you will be pleased to hear it again." " Well, repeat it again," said Ryce, " but mind, if there is a word of treason in it, I will hang you." Thereupon the bard sang :

" Y brenin biau'r ynys,
A chyriau Fraink, a chorf Rys."

" The King owns all the island wide,
A part of France and Ryce beside."

" Is it possible," said Ryce, " that that was your couplet ? How my ears must have deceived me yesterday ! Why, I have never heard a more loyal couplet in my life, or more true. The King does own the island and Ryce too, body and soul. You deserve to be rewarded instead of imprisoned. Come, I must make you some amends."

O, a clever man was Ryce of Trenewydd, and certainly his namesake Ryce Nanmor was no fool.

CHAPTER XI

Ryce proceeded with his games and training, ever seeking popularity and power, and gaining more and more every day, though always in the same cautious and prudent manner. At length Edward the Fourth died and troublous times commenced; much such times as Ryce had expected, times in which there would be again battling for the crown of England, times in which Ryce hoped to attain the summit of his ambition by means of the men and horses he had trained. Troublous times, strange times. Edward's two sons disappear; and Richard, one of the most mysterious characters in history, puts the crown on his own head. Most people think that they are perfectly well acquainted with the deeds and person [of] Richard the Third, because they have been present at the performance of Shakespear and Cibber's play, which bears the title of his history,* and which is indeed founded on certain works which pretended to be histories of him; yet [they] who form an opinion of Richard the Third from that play must of necessity entertain a very erroneous view of him in every respect. The histories on which the play was founded were written by the sycophants of the enemies of his house, on whom not the slightest reliance can be placed. The general idea entertained of Richard, and which is derived from the play, is that he was a

* *The Tragical History of King Richard III*, 1700, adapted from Shakespeare by Cibber.—[Ed.]

monster in mind and body, who murdered his nephews, had a diabolical countenance, a hump back, and withered arm. Now, it is impossible to prove at this distance of time that he did not murder his nephews, yet who ever proved that he did ? Indeed, there is no evidence of the value of a straw to prove that he ever injured a hair of their heads. Without entering into a long disquisition, the writer begs leave to state that Edward the Fifth died a natural death in the Tower, and that his brother Richard, who had Edward the Fifth been murdered would have been murdered too, was the person known in history by the name of Perkin Warbeck. Richard's grand crime seems to have been the keeping of his nephew Richard a prisoner and putting the crown on his own head, in doing which he had some shadow of justification ; for what would his own head have been worth, provided that woman Elizabeth Woodvil[l]e, his brother's widow, assumed the reins of government as her son's guardian—she who with her gang of relations had long been the curse of England ? As for Richard's horrid countenance and bodily deformity, there can be little doubt that both were extravagant and infamous exaggerations of circumstances neither shocking nor extraordinary. A venerable lady, who had seen Richard when a girl, stated more than a hundred and twenty years after his death that he was a small man, with a rather short face and a shoulder slightly, very slightly, raised, but that there was nothing frightful in his appearance, or even disagreeable. Nay, there is every reason for supposing that exactly as much injustice has been done to Richard's character as to his person. It is true that the writer does not exactly like that short face of Richard's ; he has never known a person with a short face who has not been a scoundrel. However, not

even that short face of Richard's shall ever persuade the writer that he was guilty of half the crimes and miscreancies which he is made to perpetrate in Shakespear and Cibber's play.

Shortly after Richard had assumed the crown, plots were formed for his destruction. The Duke of Buckingham, one of those who had principally aided him in his usurpation, was one of the first to machinate against him, with the view of placing the crown on the brow of Henry of Richmond, who had not a shadow of right to it; for though he claimed it as a descendant of John of Gaunt by the mother's side, he was no legitimate descendant of that personage, his mother's grandfather, through whom he claimed descent from John of Gaunt, being no legitimate son, but only the fruit of an illicit amour of that person with a certain Catherine Swineford. Nevertheless, a plot was formed for making this person King, the head plotters being the Duke of Buckingham, the Countess of Richmond (the mother of Henry), and Elizabeth Woodvil[l]e, the widow of the late King, which two ladies agreed upon a marriage between the Duke of Richmond, the son of the one, and the Lady Elizabeth, the daughter of the other by Edward the Fourth. It was concerted that Richmond should land in South Wales with what troops he could collect on the Continent, and be there joined by the Duke of Buckingham with all the Welsh force he could muster. Buckingham forthwith began to make preparations, but was speedily convinced that he could do nothing in the cause in which he had embarked, without the co-operation of Ryce ap Thomas. This co-operation he ardently desired, but how was he to procure it? He and Ryce were hereditary enemies; he had had no violent quarrel with Ryce, it is true, but he had lived at drawn daggers with Ryce's father and his grand-

father too, the celebrated Griffith ap Nicholas. Nevertheless, he did not despair, but forthwith despatched a certain Doctor Lewis to Ryce to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation with himself, and to procure his co-operation in the contemplated enterprise. Lewis, who was a great diplomatist, repaired to the Welsh chieftain, and after some preparatory conversation stated his errand. Ryce was overjoyed at what he heard. However, like a truly wise man he determined to do nothing without due reflection; inviting Lewis to stay with him for a few days, he forthwith sent for his confidential friends, the Bishop, the Abbot, and Prior, the man of law, the ancient captains, and no doubt the astrologer. All were unanimously of opinion that the proposal should be entertained. Lewis therefore was sent back to his principal with as favourable an answer as he could desire. Shortly after, a meeting was brought [about] between the Duke and chieftain. The place where they met was Trecastell, a village equidistant between Abermarlais, the castle where Ryce generally resided, and the castle of Brecknock, the stronghold of the Duke. There, after kissing and embracing, they entered into consultation; and from that place they despatched a letter to Richmond, inviting him to land at Milford Haven, and engaging to meet him there with their united forces.

Richard was soon aware that a plot was hatching against him. He was not exactly acquainted with the particulars, but he learned that Henry of Richmond was about to make a descent on South Wales, where several persons of power were in readiness to join [him]. He does not seem to have distrusted Buckingham, his old friend and henchman, but it is certain that he entertained some suspicion of Ryce, for he sent word to him, commanding him forthwith

to deliver his only son into his hands as a pledge of his loyalty to him. Ryce was startled at this order, and forthwith wrote a very submissive reply in which, though he declined sending his son under pretence that the lad was weakly and delicate, he gave Richard the strongest assurances of fidelity, saying amongst other things that if any ill-affected person landed at Milford Haven, he should only do so over his body, forwarding to him at the same time a solemn oath of allegiance, duly drawn up and signed. Richard was satisfied with the assurances and oath of the chieftain, confirmed him in certain offices which he held under the Crown, and informed him that if he only remained faithful he might expect from him every mark of favour.

The mind of Ryce now was in a great state of perplexity as to the course which he should pursue. Was he to give up his long-cherished hopes of becoming the first man in Wales, and employ those men and horses, which he had so long been carefully training, in defence of Richard, who, though he might bestow upon him some marks of favour, would assuredly never make him the first man in Wales; and who, even with his support, would probably soon be hurled from the throne by some means unconnected with the present plot? Or should he still go on with the enterprise in which he had embarked before taking his oath to Richard, which, if it were successful, as there was great reason to suppose it would be if he persisted in it, would place him on the summit of his wishes? It is true he had sworn in the most solemn manner to Richard to stand by him to the last and to suffer no foe to land in his district save over his own belly; but ought an oath, however solemn, to be holden to the prejudice of a man's advancement? Was Ryce to fulfil his oath to

Richard, and by so doing lose an opportunity of becoming the greatest man in Wales, besides incurring a fair chance of losing his life and property? "Assuredly," said Ryce, "[it] will be the height of folly in me to keep my oath. However, I will do nothing rashly. I will consult my learned, excellent, and truly Christian friend, the prelate of St. David's." Ryce forthwith despatched a letter to the Bishop of St. David's stating the dilemma in which he found himself, and speedily received a truly comforting and satisfactory answer, a part of which we transcribe: "And for that particular branch of your letter, where you undertake by oath that none ill affected shall enter at Milford without he make his passage over your bellie, my answeare is that the Earle of Richmond can be no ill affected man to the state, comming in pursuit of his own right, and withall to release us of our heavy bondage; or if you be further scrupulous herein, I shall never hold it for anie disparagement to your humilitie to lay yourself prostrate on the ground, for the true and indubitate lord of us all to make an easie entrance over you."

See the advantage of making a wise choice of your friends and having dignified and respectable people to consult with on points of difficulty! These dignified and respectable people sometimes strain at a gnat, it is true, but they will frequently, when it is convenient, not only swallow a camel themselves, but likewise show their friends the way how to do so. How fortunate it was for Ryce that he had surrounded himself with such people, and had a Bishop of St. David's to consult when he scarcely knew what to do! Suppose he had surrounded himself with such characters as his grandsire Griffith ap Nicholas [surrounded himself] with, and had only such a man as Philip ap Howel of Knockelas to consult

with in such an emergency, where would young Ryce have eventually been? Hardly in the position to which he eventually attained, that of Governor of all Wales. Pretty advice he would have gotten from Philip of Knockelas or one of his kidney; ten to one something like this: "There are only two ways of proceeding, and them I'll tell you. I am a thief, it is true, but there is honour amongst thieves, or else what would become of them? As you have sworn an oath to King Richard that you will take care of his property in this district, you must do so, knocking down or stabbing any man who attempts to meddle with it. That's the way in which we thieves do business. We would spill the last drop of our blood rather than deceive those we are sworn to. It is true you were mixed up in an enterprise with that man Richmond. He was coming over here to steal the crown, and you had led him to suppose [that you would] help him. That's awkward. Nevertheless, out of that enterprise you must get. You have since then sworn to Richard to guard the crown for him and have taken his arrhes.* Therefore you must guard the crown for Richard. Not that I would advise you to behave treacherously to Richmond. We thieves of the Marches never do so to our associates. You must not let him come over with the hope that you are going to help him in the robbery. A pretty robbery it is, and a pity that you can have no hand in it! No! you must write him a letter, saying that the robbery can't come on; that you have sworn to the landlord to take care of his property and that you must act up to your oath, more especially as the man seems to trust you; that you are very sorry, but that there must be an end of the affair, for that if he comes near the shore you will push at him with your pike,

* Something given in advance as a pledge.—[Ed.]

and that if he lands, it will only be over your mangled belly. That's one way of proceeding; now for the other. If you think that the man will come after all you can say, and you don't wish either to run him through or to be run through by him, get out of the affair altogether! Go abroad, as your father did, and serve some Duke or Kaiser till all is over, but not till you have told Richard that you are very sorry, but you can't take care of his property, and Richmond that you are exceedingly sorry, but that you can't help him in the robbery, which certainly would be a very pretty robbery. Such is the advice of a poor March cow-stealer."

Yes, such probably would have been the advice of the cow-stealer, and pretty advice it would have been to [a] man in Ryce's circumstances! What, was he to give up all his high hopes just as they were on the point * of being gratified, to follow the advice of a fellow of that description? It is true the fellow, had he spoken in that way, would have spoken somewhat scripturally, for does not the Scripture say somewhere: "He who sweareth to his neighbour and disappointeth him not, though it be to his own hindrance . . ."? But what then? Scripture is a capital thing to appeal to when it happens to be on your side, but what is Scripture worth when its text forbids you to do that which it is your interest to do—at any rate, your worldly interest, which some of the followers of Jeremy Bentham seem to think the only real interest after all? No, no! precepts of Scripture are worth very little, unless they sanction the means which you are employing in order to advance yourself. And surely he is no friend to a man who restrains him from doing an action by which he is likely to become a governor, by saying to him:

* MS. "part."

"You must not do it, for it is contrary to Scripture." We don't find the good Bishop of St. David's quoting to Ryce that pestilent text. No, no! for if Ryce did not deceive Richard after swearing to him, how was he to turn his trained men and horses to the best account? How was he to become Governor of Wales and able to do the good Bishop this or that good turn? We find the good Bishop recommending quibbling such as a common cow-stealer would have scouted, advising Ryce, if he had any scruples about a certain part of his oath, to let Richmond walk over his belly. Pah! No, not pah! but bravo! for was not the above wise advice? Did not the following the advice make Ryce what he wished to be, and are not all means justified by success? There is in the Welsh language an englyn, written by a bard who flourished towards the conclusion of the sixteenth century, to this effect:

> "Which is the most hateful, I've long been in doubt,
> Perhaps there is some one who kindly will tell,
> The being who carries two faces about,
> Or the being who speaketh of nobody well?"

The writer is not going to say which of the two he considers the most hateful. He will, however, let a word drop to show which he considers the most wise. The man who speaks well of nobody hurts nobody but himself; the double-dealer generally makes his fortune.

Whether the Bishop's advice was right or wrong, one thing is certain, that Ryce acted up to it. An event, however, shortly occurred, which startled him and many others. This was Buckingham's outbreak, his sudden bursting into rebellion against Richard the Third, at the head of his own followers, the men of Brecknock, unassisted by and without having consulted the other conspirators. The motive which

urged him to this act will probably always remain a mystery. Some people have thought that, imagining he was able with his own strength to dethrone Richard, he wished to have the sole merit of putting the crown on Richmond's head; others, that he wished to win the crown for himself; a third class have thought that, imagining Richard had become acquainted with his treachery, he conceived that his safest course would be to take up arms at once. One of these suppositions may be true; the last perhaps is the most probable; but no one can be positive on the subject. A fatal outburst it proved to Buckingham. Just as he and his force were about to enter England, they were stopped by the swollen Severn. The Welsh tarried on the western bank for three days till they were almost starved. They then abandoned their leader, who sought refuge in the house of an English dependent of his called Bannister. Bannister betrayed Buckingham to Richard, who cut off his head. Bannister has been called a knave for doing so, and with justice. But was Buckingham a less knave than Bannister? Did he not also betray his master? Some will say that Richard was not his lawful master. Others will say that the person whom you acknowledge to be your master is so, and that after you have taken a man's hiring money you have no right to look into his genealogy. It would have been well for Buckingham if he had remained faithful to Richard. Double-dealing is frequently a gainful trade, but let not everybody try to practise it! Buckingham was ruined by it, Ryce throve by it; but then there was a wide difference between the head which Buckingham lost from his shoulders and the one which Ryce ever kept on his.

All was quiet for a little time. Richard after Buckingham's overthrow imagined that he was safe

on the English throne and that the hopes of Richmond were blasted for ever. Richmond, however, did not despair but determined to persist in his enterprise, saying, no doubt, " The crown to my brow or my body to the crow ! " or something to that effect. One morning, a messenger, hot with haste and his rowels bloody with spurring, arrived at the castle of Abermarlais where Ryce sat, bearing a letter to Ryce the chieftain. It was from Richmond, informing Ryce that he was arrived at Milford and begging him forthwith to join him with all his men. Ryce had for some time been in daily expectation of receiving such a summons. His preparations were made ; the gentry and commons of the district were ready to second him with their lives and fortunes. But when the summons came, it was as if it had come unexpectedly, as if he had made no preparations at all ; his resolution at once gave way and he felt powerless. All he was going to risk at once rushed in[to] his mind. He was about to risk life, but life was a minor consideration. Ryce was brave enough. Who ever heard of a cowardly Welshman ? But he was going to risk what was far dearer to him than life, his lofty station. From being a powerful chieftain he might become in a fortnight's space an outlaw, a beggar like John Holland, the Earl of Oxford, the follower of the house of Lancaster, who a little time before had been seen with naked feet, begging his bread through the mud of the towns of Brabant. What should he do ? Richmond's enterprise was a promising one, provided he aided it, and Richard had many foes, the worst of all foes, secret foes. But Richard was in himself a host. He was one of the most dauntless of men, small of stature but of tremendous prowess, and amongst other feats had at the head of a small army worsted the Scots on their own ground, sacked the

town of Edinburgh, and had returned to England laden with glory and Scottish spoil. Richard, if only a part of his people remained true to him, might vanquish, kill, or capture Richmond, in spite of Ryce and all his trained men and horses. What was Ryce to do? There he sat in his hall of Abermarlais, unhelmed and unmailed, pondering over the affair. Suddenly he sends a summons to the two ancient captains and Morgan of Kidwely. They were almost instantly before him, for long before he had thought of sending for them * they were hastening to Abermarlais, armed to the teeth. "Come, chieftain," said they, "Richmond is at the dale, and all our people are eager to join them. They only wait to see the Tair Bran; all the world will follow Ryce and the three ravens. Come, shall we hoist the raven banner?" But there sat Ryce motionless, with his eyes turned upon the wall. The man of the law and the ancient captains looked at each other. "What does this mean?" said they. "It means," said Ryce, starting up, "that the enterprise is a dangerous one and may ruin us all." "But surely we ought to have thought of that before we engaged in it," said the ancient captains, again looking at each other. "We ought to, we ought to," said Ryce, striding about, "but what are we to do now? But I know; send for Robin of the Dale." Now Robin of the Dale was not far off, for though he was called Robin of the Dale from the place of his birth, he lived under Ryce's wing, who always wanted him to be near in order that he might ask him questions. Robin presently stood before him. He was a loutish-looking fellow of low birth and Flemish origin. There was an occasional gleam in his eye, however, which showed he was no fool. "Richmond is at the

* MS. "him."

dale," said Ryce, "and has sent me word to join him; now tell me at once, is it best for me to obey or stay at home?" The prophet looked down on the ground and said nothing. "Shall I go, or shall I stay?" said Ryce sharply. "I hardly know which will be most advisable," said the prophet. "But you must know," thundered Ryce, "what are you here for but to know?" The prophet wrung his fingers till the joints cracked, and looked the image of perplexity. "This moment tell me," said Ryce, "or——" "I can tell you nothing," said the prophet, "till I have consulted the stars." "Tell me this moment," vociferated Ryce, "or I will hang you." "Only give me till to-morrow," said the prophet, "only till to-morrow." "This moment," said Ryce, "or in another moment you hang." "Aye, hang the dog, hang him," said the man of law and the ancient captains; "a pretty prophet he, not to be able to tell us offhand what to do." Every limb of the prophet shook; he writhed himself from side to side, as if suffering dreadful internal pain. Suddenly, however, he became calm, put his finger to his forehead, and appeared to reflect; then, standing erect, he clapped his hands, and looking Ryce boldly in the face, sang the following uncouth strain:

"Hie thee to the dale,
I'll to the vale,
To drink good ale
And soe, I pre, han a care of us all."

Ryce mused for a moment, then, turning to his friends, he said: "He is a wise man and gives good counsel. I am resolved to join Richmond. Set the ravens a-flying. Ryce is about to lead his children."

It was a gallant cavalcade that Ryce led towards Milford. Close behind him trooped two hundred horse of his own name. Then came squadrons of friends

and relations. Next a brave-looking little band of gentry from North Wales, who had for some days past been tarrying with Ryce in expectation of Richmond's summons, amongst whom was Master Robert Salisburie. Then at the head of their respective troops came the two ancient captains and the man deeply versed in the common laws of the realm, the last, no doubt, hoping to become Lord Chief Justice of Wales, partly through Ryce's influence with the future King, and partly through the merit of his own great deeds. As the cavalcade rode slowly along, its length was continually increased by horsemen, who, one by one, two by two, or by knots, came galloping to join it. As Ryce slowly descended the dale towards Milford, he was at the head of two thousand determined cavaliers.

Ryce had at last taken a manly course; but oh, there was a wide difference between the deportment of young Ryce when he received Richmond's summons to join him at Milford and that of his grandsire, old Griffith ap Nicholas, when the cry of Edward from Gloucester reached his ear. There was no consulting of astrologers with the old man; no debating with friends as to which was the wisest course to pursue; no striding up and down in perplexity. "Up with the raven flag! I'll be with him ere I sleep," shouted the old chief, whilst the young . . . However, the old man got a gory cockscomb, the young the golden garter:

"Y gwr dewr a'r gard eurin."

After all, what becometh a young man more than prudence, for has he not many fair years in prospect? The aged can afford to be rash; no fair years can he expect, only a few days, and those clouded.

Ryce found Richmond at Milford with his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, and a small force of Bretons.

He arrived very opportunely, for the spirits of the two earls had sunk to a very low ebb and they were thinking of returning to Brittany just before he made his appearance. His arrival cheered them instantly. Ryce, after paying his obeisance to Richmond, took him into a house and held discourse with him. After a short time both reappeared. Both looked joyous. What had been the subject of their discourse? No one knows. People, however, have said that at that interview Ryce had promised to make Richmond King of England, and Richmond promised Ryce to make him Governor of Wales. Richmond was forthwith proclaimed King by the title of Henry the Seventh, and Ryce made a speech in which he exhorted everybody to pay allegiance and be faithful to the "indubitate" lord of the realm there present. All was presently life, bustle, and glee at Milford. The whole place resounded with shouts of "Duw cadw Harri seithved." * The Welsh embraced the Breton soldiers, talked to them, and feasted them. The descendants of the army of Maxen Wledig were delighted to find themselves amongst a people who loaded them with hospitality and who spoke a language not much dissimilar to their own.

Leaving Milford, Richmond and his army marched for Glamorgan. When they reached Nedd, the abbot of the stately monastery came forth with his monks, blessed the adventurer, called him the Lord's anointed, and exhorted the people of the neighbourhood. The good abbot little dreamt that he was blessing the man whose son was destined by Providence to unroof not only the abbey of Neath, but likewise every other in Wales and England, and to say to the monks: "Go forth, ye lazy crew! Either earn your bread

* "God save Henry the Seventh."—[Ed.]

or starve!" Richmond in gratitude presented the abbot with a charter, by which he authorised him to establish a college at Neath for the benefit of the Welsh, of the same kind and enjoying the same privileges as Cambridge and Oxford. The right granted was never turned to any account. There is yet no royal college in Wales.* The Cambrian youth intended for the ecclesiastical profession still repair as of old to the English universities, in too many instances to learn little else but puppyism and folly, to despise the simple manners of their own country and what ought to be their boast and glory, that rival of the Arabic in copiousness, the mighty speech of Gomer.

After passing through part of Glamorgan, Richmond and Ryce turned abruptly to the north, and after passing through various Welsh counties, ever gathering strength as they went along, bore to the east and debouched upon England with an army amounting to about five thousand men. Richard the Third, after Buckingham had failed in his enterprise and lost his head, believed himself perfectly safe upon the throne. He knew that Richmond meditated a descent upon Wales, but imagined that if he arrived there, he would either return at once, finding that no one was disposed to join him, or, in the event of his trying to penetrate into the country, would be taken prisoner and delivered up to himself by Ryce ap Thomas, in whom he placed implicit confidence. He was startled, therefore, when he heard that his foe had not only landed in Wales but had been joined by that trusty Welshman, and that the two were advancing against him, with the half of Wales at their backs. Though startled, he was, however, not daunted, for nothing could daunt the

* Borrow was, of course, writing sixty years ago.—[Ed.]

man of the wry shoulder. He had troops in readiness with which to advance against the enemy. The two armies met at Bosworth Field. Every one knows the result of Bosworth Field. Had Richard's troops, or rather their leaders, been faithful to him, there can be no doubt that he would have won the fight, but he was surrounded with traitors. Scarcely had the armies joined, when Sir William Stanley went over to Ryce, and both, uniting their forces, bore down upon Richard. There was one man, however, who was true to Richard, and that was himself. The unfortunate monarch fought as never monarch or hero fought before. Putting spurs to the horse of Arabian blood, almost as fiery and fearless as himself, and screaming the war-cry of his family, "York! York!" he either cut down or overthrew all that opposed him. Making directly for Richmond, who sat on his saddle paralysed, gazing on the terrible little man with the crown on his head speeding towards [him] on the terrible little horse, like a destroying angel on the pale steed, Richard nearly won that battle. The little king had already cut down Blount, Richmond's banner-man, and had trodden under his horse's heels the flag which, in compliment to the ancient Britons, bore upon it the name of Uthyr, and was making directly for his foe, hoping with one blow to decide the fortune of the day, when a clump of Welsh spears took the horse and rider in flank and bore them to the ground, where both were instantly despatched. Thus fell Richard and his only friend. After the battle Richmond had his crown; Ryce and Stanley the plunder of his tent, in earnest of future rewards. But though in the plunder of the tent they were equal sharers, they were not so in future rewards. Ryce got the garter for his knee; Stanley the axe for his neck.

So fell Richard and his only friend. It was necessary that Richard should fall, for God had business to be done which Richard could not do. But woe, woe, eternal infamy and woe to those who sell their master. Selah.

CHAPTER XII

Richmond and his host marched to London where he was regularly crowned, where he shortly after married her who was generally called the Lady Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward the Fourth, thus uniting, as sycophants said, the houses of York and Tudor. By this marriage he had two sons, the eldest, out of compliment to his countrymen, the man born at Pembroke Castle,* named Arthur; the second, Henry after himself. The ardent Welsh, on hearing that the presumptive heir to the throne was named after the British hero of old, were delighted and said: "Merlin was a prophet after all and Arthur shall yet come to reign over fair Britain." But they were mistaken. No Arthur was to succeed Henry, for God had work to be done which no Arthur could perform.

"I can't do without my trusty Welshman, to whom I owe my crown," said Henry, after knighting Ryce. "You must stay with me for a time." And Henry speedily wanted Ryce, who proved a trusty Welshman to him to the day of Henry's death, probably for the sufficient reason that his own interest was bound up with that of the monarch. Presently occurred the rebellion of Lambert Simnel, who, pretending to be the son of the Duke of Malmsey memory, and the rightful heir to the throne, came from Ireland with an army of Irish kerns and German lanceknechts, the whole commanded by the German

* He was born at Winchester.—[Ed.]

adventurer, Martin Swartz. It was well for Henry that he had Ryce and his Welshmen at hand to send with other forces against these people. Had the battle of Stoke been lost to Henry, he would most certainly have been obliged to vacate the throne to the baker's son; and it was for some time doubtful to which side Fortune would incline in that battle of Stoke, one of the most furious on record. The Irish, who composed the bulk of the army, though only half-armed, having neither helms nor breastplates, fought with inconceivable fury, whilst the lanceknechts behaved with great firmness, and Swartz performed all that could be expected from a brave and experienced general. Finally, however, the royalists, who far exceeded the adventurers in numbers, prevailed. Swartz, with the greater part of his lanceknechts and four thousand Irish, was slain, and Simnel and his tutor, Simon the priest, taken prisoners. Ryce greatly distinguished himself in this battle, in which, however, he is said to have fought for his life. At one time he was very hardly pressed, and it was then that he received a wound from an Irish skene, the mark of which he carried to his grave. Not much mention is made in the English annals of this same battle of Stoke, but a right furious battle it was. And no wonder! The combatants were principally Irish and Welsh, and "When Celt meets Celt, then comes the tug of war." Shortly after this affair Ryce returned, laden with honours and rewards, to his native domains, where thousands were waiting to welcome him, amongst whom were bards who had prepared eulogistic strains, some of which have been preserved to the present day.*

* After "to welcome him" comes the following cancelled passage: "particularly 'though you men come without a coronet—Merched gwragedd, bonedd byd' sang an expecting Bard."—[Ed.]

He was not permitted by Henry to remain long in quiet in Wales, being quickly summoned by that monarch to attend him in his expedition against France. Ryce levied a fine body of cavalry and foot, and putting himself at their head crossed the sea with his master to Calais. The expedition was a disgraceful one, not to the British armies but to Henry. He had proclaimed war against France, with the avowed intention of attempting to recover the territory in that country which certain of his predecessors had lost, and called upon the nobility and people to assist him in his enterprise. Both had responded to the call. People flocked to his standard, and the nobility had put themselves to immense expense in making preparations to assist their monarch in so glorious an enterprise. Henry led a gallant army across the sea, with which he could have accomplished anything. But he accomplished nothing. At Boulogne, receiving overtures from the French King, who offered to pay him two hundred thousand pounds if he would return home, he made peace with him at once, took the money, which he put into his own coffers, and said to his followers: "We must go home." Every one [was] astounded, but presently murmurs of indignation arose. The English scowled and swore; the Welsh gnashed their teeth and cursed. A mutiny seemed on the point of breaking out. Henry was terrified. In the midst of the tumult, however, a man was seen moving rapidly about amongst the Welsh, casting quick glances to the right and left. He swore not, neither did he curse. Not a word did he utter, not a sound save the sibilant "st." But as the rage of the most raging sea is stilled when a ladleful of oil is cast upon it, so was the rage of the most excitable people in the world stilled by the sibilant which proceeded from the

lips of Ryce, for he was the man. The Welsh became quiet at once, and presently the English, who more than any other people in the world are influenced by example. Ryce performed for Henry at Boulogne nearly as good service as he did at Bosworth. Ryce's interest was mixed up with that of Henry; therefore Henry had not a more faithful servant than Ryce of South Wales.

Good service also did Ryce to Henry in all the comings of Warbeck, or, more properly speaking, of Richard the Third; for that Warbeck was Richard, son of Edward the Fourth, and consequently, his brother having died, the veritable Richard the Third, nobody ought to entertain a doubt. The next good piece of service that Ryce performed for Henry was in the first insurrection of the Cornishmen in the year 1497. These people had been goaded into rebellion by taxation. Henry the Seventh, under pretence of requiring money in order to raise an army to punish the Scots—who in support of the claims of Warbeck had invaded England, and after committing much damage had returned, on finding that the people of the country were not disposed to rise in favour of that remarkable person—had been empowered by the Parliament to raise the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds under certain restrictions. Henry, however, proceeded to raise the tax in the most arbitrary and tyrannical manner. The Cornishmen, a poor, but strong, brave, and high-spirited race, made loud complaints; but finding they were not attended to, raised their ancient, famous, and redoubtable cry, "One and all," and putting Michael Joseph, a blacksmith of Bodmin, which is generally called the Blacksmith's Town, at their head, marched into Devonshire, and from thence directed their course to the metropolis. Their force amounted to about

sixteen thousand men, and in the midst of the host was borne a banner on which were painted the arms of Bodmin, namely, The Hammer and Tongs. At Wells they were joined by one Lord Audley, who assumed the nominal command, though the real leaders were the aforesaid Michael Joseph and one Flammock, a lawyer. At Wells, leaving the direct road to London, they diverged towards Kent, expecting to be joined by the people of that county. This was a false step ; the people of Kent, frightened at their wild appearance and the unknown language which they spoke, not one in ten of them understanding a word of English, refused to join them. In diminished numbers and somewhat dispirited they reached Blackheath, from whence they proposed to march on London. Here, however, they were attacked by a large and regular army, namely, the one which had been intended to march against Scotland. This army was commanded by Lord Daubeney and Ryce ap Thomas. Ryce was mounted on a horse much celebrated in song, called Llwyd y Bacseu, or Grey Fetterlocks, and had along with him fifteen hundred of his old trained cavalry. A furious battle commenced, somewhat resembling that of Stoke. The Cornish army was far inferior in number to the royalist, and also in arms and discipline, the men consisting of peasants, blacksmiths, and fishermen, whose principal arms were bludgeons and sledge hammers. Yet they met their foes most manfully. The Cornish are a race partly Celtic, partly Saxon, but more Celtic than Saxon. They are incomparably the strongest men in Britain ; they make the best soldiers and perhaps sailors, though it must be admitted that the men of Norfolk, who are of pure Scandinavian blood, all but rival them in battling with the sea and storm. So it is not surprising that the Cornish army

on Blackheath, though inferior to their enemies in numbers, arms, and discipline, nearly won the day, which, however, they eventually lost. "The Cornish men," we read in the "Short View," "never gave over to the last, and certainly, had they been well armed, and their cause answerable to their stomaches, they had gone neere to have endangered the day, but in the end were overcome and put to flight, leaving two thousand and upwards of their companions dead on the field." In this battle, as at that of Stoke, Ryce highly distinguished himself. On his horse Grey Fetterlocks "he made up to Lord Audley, fought and took him, and conveyed him prisoner to the King, who caused his head to be chopped off and also those of the blacksmith and lawyer who had been captured. The common men were, however, dealt mercifully with, being allowed to ransome themselves for two or three shillings a head."

If Ryce was a favourite with Henry the Seventh, he was no less so with Henry the Eighth, who delighted in his company and conversation and was in the habit of calling him "Father Preece." When Henry in the heyday of his youth, strength, and beauty invaded France at the instigation of his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Spain, and the Pope, Ryce attended him with his redoubtable cavalry, and was mentioned along with Talbot, Somerset, and other mighty ones by the poet Ocland, who in sonorous Latin hexameters wrote an account of his expedition :

> "Talbotus belliger audax,
> Poiningus, Ricceus Thomas flos Cambro-Britannum
> Et Somersetus."

He was present at the "Battle of the Spurs" and at the capture of the strong towns of Terwin and Tournay, in all of which affairs he highly distinguished himself, but more especially at the Battle of the

Spurs, where he took the brave de Longueville prisoner—that singular battle in which the British by one tremendous charge routed in a moment the pride and glory of France, her high-blooded and brilliant cavaliers.

On the return of the British from France, Ryce received various marks of favour from his sovereign —chancellorships, seneschalships, and various kinds of lordships were presented to him with marvellous quickness, so that at last there was not one great office in Wales which he did not hold in his hand. So great was his favour at Court that one of his bards called him *Gwenwyn Lloegr,* or England's Poison, alluding to the envy with which the English courtiers viewed bluff Henry's liking for Father Preece.

The concluding part of his life was chiefly spent in Wales, where he lived in dignified and princely state at his various fair and noble castles, keeping up to the very last those martial games and reviews in which he delighted when young, and which had in no slight degree contributed to his exaltation—and here it will be necessary for us to quote the quaint and expressive words of his old biographer: "His assistantes at these reviews and mocke battailes weare his olde fellowe soldiers, who in manie a harde rencounter, bothe at home and in forraigne partes, had shared with him the daungers as well as the glorie of the daye, and nowe often mett together in such bloodless showes, to acte over their paste fieldes, when all the yonge gentrie of the countrie flocked thither as to a militarie schoole." Verily, few governors ever seemed to have lived in a more magnificent manner than Ryce ap Thomas, and to have filled their office more to their own honour and their sovereign's weal and glory.

Two or three years before he died he became

very religious, but after the fashion of the times. He was frequent at chapel, frequent at confession, and made churchmen presents of gold, jewels, rich furs, and lands. At last, quite satiated with the good things of this world, and having, according to his own opinion and the general opinion of the time, taken the most prudential steps for securing to himself a share in the good things of the next, he departed this life A.D. 1527, "after a course of seventie and sixe yeeres," leaving his immense possessions to his grandson, a youth of nineteen, his son Griffith having died some time before his own departure. He was twice married. His second wife was "Jounett, daughter of Thomas Matthewes, of an auntiente house of Glamorgan," who brought him no child. He had, however, various illegitimate children by other women.

He was originally buried in the Friars' Priory at Carmarthen, by the side of his first wife. Shortly afterwards a sumptuous monument was erected over the place of burial. On the demolition of the monasteries the bodies of the great man and his wife were removed to the Church of St. Peter's at Carmarthen, and the monument also. The present writer walked to Carmarthen from Llandovery for no other purpose than to see this tomb. After some difficulty he discovered it, for no concourse of pilgrims are in the habit of coming to gaze upon it. It is of very large size, and stands by the wall near the communion-table, on the left side as you go up to it. The chieftain and his lady are represented in a recumbent posture, with their hands clasped upon their breasts, their feet towards the altar. The man is in armour, but helmetless, and with long hair in locks on either side of his head. The male figure is of a very large size, that of the woman in comparison remarkably small. The sculptor probably wished to intimate, not that

the lady was of small stature, but that Ryce far exceeded in height the common run of mortals. The woman lies next to the wall.

At the time of his death he was "Knight Constable and Lieutenant of Brecknock, Chamberlayne of Carmarthen and Cardigan, Seneschal and Chauncellor of Haverfordwest, Rowse, and Buelth; Justiciar of South Wales and Governour of All Wales; Knight Bannerett and Knight of the most Honorable Order of the Garter." But besides offices and titles he had enormous possessions, gems and jewels of high price, and his many and ample coffers were filled to the very lids with gold.

It would be difficult, if we were to search the annals of the world, to find a man whose life exhibited such a continual scene of prosperity as that of Ryce ap Thomas. His was an active and enterprising life, but he was successful in everything that he undertook, and at the period of his death was enjoying the very height not only of court favour but popularity. If Henry the Eighth on hearing of his decease said, "So Father Preece is gone, gone," the Welsh cried, "Great Ryce is dead, ohone, ohone!" Now surely this Ryce must have been endowed with very extraordinary qualities to have enjoyed so much prosperity and favour with everybody! What his qualities were let us endeavour to point out!

The qualities of Ryce ap Thomas seem to have been the following: great love of self, sagacity, perseverance, physical bravery, and caution, the last in a very high degree. He who is thus endowed, however low his birth, is sure to make a figure in, and be regarded by, the world; and he who with these endowments possesses the advantages of high birth and large possessions may be expected to become something very similar to our distinguished Welsh-

man. But how many people have possessed all the qualities of Ryce ap Thomas, along with his adventitious advantages? Very few indeed; therefore the difficulty of finding any one so uniformly prosperous in every respect. And here we cannot help remarking that it was well for the Welshman that he was anything but deficient in the least dazzling of the above-mentioned qualities—caution. Without caution in a high degree Ryce would never have been so uniformly successful, nor will any one. The person who seems most to have resembled him in modern times was a certain distinguished general, who had assuredly all his selfishness, perseverance, and resolution, and, indeed, something of his caution, but not all. Wellington was quite as cautious not to offend the great as Ryce ap Thomas, but then he was not equally cautious not to offend those who are not great, and who yet have the power to make the lives of the great exquisitely miserable. Wellington was civil to nobody but the great, Ryce was civil to everybody, so besides enjoying as much favour at court as Wellington ever did, he had ten times his influence over the people and soldiery. Wellington could never have quelled a mutiny in the army against George the Fourth with a "st," as Ryce ap Thomas quelled one against Henry the Seventh, and Ryce was never pelted by the populace with dead cats and stones, as Wellington was.

And had Ryce ap Thomas no other qualities than those stated above? Had he no generosity? Did his heart never beat with noble emotion? Generosity! None: caution and valour may exist in the same individual, but generosity and selfishness never. A person may feast and patronise bards, and give tournaments and entertainments to great people, and yet have a heart indescribably selfish, a heart which entertains no pity for misfortune, never glows

with noble emotion. Noble emotion induced a man to say, when he heard that Warbeck was going to be hung, "If I had thought that young man was King Edward's son, I would never have fought against him"; but that man was not Ryce but Stanley, who had not received half the favours from King Edward that Ryce had. Ryce was as silent on hearing that Warbeck was going to be hung, whom everybody believed to be King Edward's son, as Wellington was * when he heard that Ney was going to be shot, whom everybody knew to be a hero; though perhaps Ryce's silence was more capable of justification than Wellington's; a word from Ryce could hardly have saved Warbeck, but most probably would have ruined Ryce, whereas a word from Wellington could have saved the hero, without even clouding the prospects of the general.

However, with those qualities of his and that cold heart Ryce was an eminently prosperous man, just one of those people whom the world loves to fall down before and worship. And now the question arises whether the possession of a noble, generous heart may not be dispensed with. Certainly, if a man should have no other view than to attain to eminence and dignity in this life, he may well dispense with a generous heart. Indeed, if he is playing the high game, he had much better be without such a heart than with one, for it is a billion to a unit that such a heart will prove his ruin or prevent his rising. Such a heart cost poor Stanley his head.

But is worldly dignity the greatest good? Millions will say "No," though they think that it is, and act in a manner that shows that they think so. There are a few, however, who will say "No" who neither think that it is nor act as if they thought it

* MS. "did."

were; who think that even as far as this life is concerned, what is called worldly prosperity is not the highest good, and that a person with a noble, generous heart, even though buffeted by fortune, may enjoy more pleasure, more delight, than one of the cold-hearted ones most highly favoured by that goddess. It is not the governor of Wales who always derives most delight from Wales; and perhaps more than one who has fled to Wales and wandered through it, in order for a time to escape from a world that requited his attempts to do good with ingratitude and contumely, has derived more happiness from merely gazing at that beautiful country than the great Ryce ever [did] from having the government of that country and all its places of power and profit at his command. It is only the man of the genial heart who can derive much pleasure from the beauties of Wales.

But there is another thing to be considered, another question to be asked: After all, have these prosperous people, as they are called, such long leases in this world as many people whom they at heart despise? It is questionable whether they have. They think and are told that they shall live for ever, either through their progeny or their name; but they and their flatterers are frequently egregiously mistaken. There was this great Ryce, for example. He thought that he should always live in his progeny and his fame, and his bards had assured him that he should. A word about his progeny. He had one son; that son died before him, and it is probable that the death of that son caused him the only pang at heart that he ever felt; that son, however, left a son, the fairest and most promising lad in Wales, in whom the old man took pride and comfort, and who survived his grandsire and inherited all his enormous riches. Yet ere that youth had attained the age of

twenty-three, Henry the Eighth laid his tremendous clutch upon him for inscribing the name Fitzurien on his coat-of-arms, cut off his head, and confiscated all the vast possessions of Ryce to his own use. So there was an end to the family of Ryce. And now for the name of Ryce. The bards told Ryce that his name would live for ever and be blessed by countless generations. But who at the present day ever heard of the name of Ryce ? Nobody. Who ever read of it ? Why, the present writer, and about half a dozen obscure bookworms like himself. The name of Ryce is as little known as the names of the bards who promised him immortality and thought they were securing immortality to themselves by chanting his praises. The writer has been in Ryce's country and talked and asked questions about Ryce, but never could find any person who had heard of him who was once called the great Ryce of Wales, or of the bards who had made him the theme of many a tuneful, alliterative lay; though everybody had plenty to say of a certain old vicar who lived about a hundred years after Ryce, who cut no particular figure in life, merely preached the Gospel, visited the sick, and wrote humble verses, which, odd enough, everybody could repeat. That vicar was one Rees Pritchard. This consignment of the mighty chieftain to oblivion in his own land, and this cherishing of the memory of the poor vicar, brought powerfully to the mind of the writer certain lines, not Welsh but Persian, to the following effect :

" Great Caroun is dead and is nothing, the man
Who left forty castles replete with gold store ;
But living though dead is the good Nourshivan,
In the fair name he left he has death triumph'd o'er."

So much for Ryce ap Thomas, the head of the Ryces of South Wales.

CHAPTER XIII

Ieuan Deulwyn, the bard and friend of this remarkable [man], was a native of Cydweli in Carmarthenshire. His real surname is not known, but it is probable that he was one of the Ryces. He was a good poet and highly ingenious versifier. Of his skill in versification he has given a remarkable proof in an ode to Ryce, the lines of which are of eight syllables or four, according to the pleasure of the transcriber, for example :

" E wnaeth y Fran ei Nyth frŷ
A'r Wylan ar ei Wely,"

or :

" E wnaeth y Fran
Ei Nyth frŷ
A'r Wylan
Ar ei Wely,"

and which is written on the principle of counterchange, so that either line of the two or any line of the four may respectively commence the couplet or quartet, for example :

" The crow has made
His nest on high,
Above his bed
The azure sky :
By yonder road
Ryce has his seat
The island broad
Beneath his feet,"

which may likewise be read :

" His nest on high
The crow has made,"

or :

" The azure sky
Above his bed, etc.,"

and this counterchange may be carried through the whole of the original.

The learned Master William Salisburie in his book on rhetoric says another form of inversion is when words are placed face and counterface, its name *gwrthnewid*, counterchange. He then gives an example of counterchange from Ieuan Deulwyn's " Ode to Ryce ap Thomas," and another from an ode by Dafydd ab Edmund to old Tom Salisburie.

The " Ode to Ryce," of which we have been speaking, was probably composed whilst the chieftain was away on his glorious expedition into England, for in one of his couplets or quartets, the one quoted by Salisburie, the bard says he shall be welcome back, even though he returns without a coronet. Ieuan Deulwyn's most beautiful production is a cowydd to a birch-tree. As he styled himself " John of the two Groves " he probably lived amongst groves and was well acquainted with trees.

Gutyn Owain now demands attention. He was a pupil of Dafydd ab Edmund and followed his master as a servant to the bardic congress of Carmarthen, as has been already said. He was a native of North Wales and resided in the neighbourhood of Croes Oswallt, that is, Oswald's Cross, or Oswestry. He was a prolific and elegant poet ; a great many of his pieces have been printed in the " Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru," and are amongst the best in that collection. The dialogue between him and his love is full of humour. She reproaches him so bitterly for his bad

poetry and poverty that he takes affront, and declares that he shall be happy to resign her acquaintance. His dirge on the Abbot of Ial is valuable, as it depicts the way of life of a monastic prince in the fifteenth century. Besides being a poet Gutyn was a herald and a learned antiquarian, and made some excellent transcripts of the ancient records of his own country.

Tudor Aled was another pupil of the great Ab Edmund. He derived his surname from the place of his birth, the vale of Aled in Denbighshire. He left behind several elegies and other pieces which display considerable poetical talent. He must have attained to a great age, for he carried off the chair at a bardic congress held at Caer Wys in Flintshire on the second of September, 1523, in the fifteenth year of Henry the Eighth, which must have been sixty years after the death of his master, Dafydd ab Edmund. He lived in the days of rich abbeys and generous abbots. One of his most meritorious pieces is a cowydd addressed to the Abbot of Aberconwy, requesting the gift of a horse.

Dafydd, surnamed Nanmor, from the place of his birth in Merionethshire, was the bard of Ryce, not of South Wales, but of Tywyn in Denbighshire, a chieftain of vast possessions both in that country and Mona. Ryce feasted Dafydd at his board and Dafydd requited his hospitality with laudatory odes * and, when he died, with an elegy. After the death of Ryce of Tywyn, Dafydd Nanmor attached himself to Dafydd Rhydderch, son of Ieuan the Grey of Gogerddan, whose praises he also sang and whose daughter Llio's hair he extolled in a cowydd. Those who gave

* After "laudatory odes," a cancelled passage, "the finest and most powerful compositions of the kind in the Welsh language."—[Ed.]

this man meat and drink acted wisely, for they got something better in return, namely, life after death, for they still live in his strains and doubtless will, as long as the Welsh language is understood. The poems of Dafydd Nanmor are truly astonishing compositions. In them the capabilities of the mighty Cimbric tongue are more successfully developed than in the strains of any other poet. Those who wish to become acquainted with Welsh rhyme and alliteration in their most captivating forms should study the works of Dafydd Nanmor. In them, more perhaps than in the strains of any other poet, is Cimbric grandiloquence exhibited. Those who are fond of fiery bursts of imagination, ascending to heaven like belchings of flame from Heckla, should peruse the works of Dafydd Nanmor. To attempt to imitate in English his rich tracery of rhyme and alliteration would be vain; the English language is not very susceptible of rhyme and alliteration; original extracts without cumbrous commentaries would be useless to the general reader. Those who are curious with regard to *cynghanedd*, or consonance, are referred to Dafydd Nanmor's poems, especially his elegy, preserved in the "Gorchestion." Of his grandiloquence, however, which occasionally assumes a character of superb hyperbole, we can convey an idea, faint, it is true, by a translation or two. About the middle of the cowydd on Ryce are lines to the following effect:

"There was a noble feast, they say,
In Lleon ar Wysg in olden day;
Another held Caswallon good,
A regal one, in old Caer Ludd.
Full twenty thousand beeves and deer
Were slain to find the guests with cheer;
Yet at one feast of Ryce we view
More flesh than smok'd at yonder two."

The feast at Lleon ar Wysg, it will be well to observe here, was given by Beli, son of Dyfnwal Moelmud, who ascended the throne of Britain in the year 401 B.C., which Beli was the brother of Bran, or Brennus, who sacked Rome. The feast at Caer Ludd, or London, was held by Caswallon to celebrate his triumph over Julius Cæsar, whom the British monarch compelled to retreat to his ships, and who was taunted by Horace for his defeat in the following line * :

* * * *

Further on in the cowydd are lines something like these :

> " For Ryce if hundred thousands plough'd
> The lands around his fair abode ;
> Did vines of thousand vineyards bleed ;
> Still corn and wine great Ryce would need ;
> If all the earth to bread most fine
> Were turned, and water all to wine,
> Three roaring feasts in Ryce's hall
> Would swallow earth and water all."

Dafydd Nanmor is our *beau ideal* of a bard of an ancient Welsh chieftain, idolising the hand which fed him and blending in magnificent consonance magnificent exaggeration with a great deal of what was true.† And the man whose praises he delighted to sing, Rice of Tywyn, is our *beau ideal* of an old-fashioned Cambrian chieftain. We do not believe that the dinners of Ryce came at all up to the description which Dafydd gives of them. We do not believe that he entertained innumerable hosts equal to those of Asia, as Dafydd says he did in a line of his cowydd, with the flesh of more than twice twenty thousand

* Blank in MS.—[ED.]

† Originally Borrow wrote, " blending magnificent consonance with magnificent exaggeration and many truly sublime thoughts and descriptions."—[ED.]

beeves and deer, with a world of bread and an ocean of wine. But we have no doubt that he entertained now and then a thousand people, in a mighty booth, with a super-abundance of roasted beef, mutton, and seethed kid, a tolerable quantity of barley bread and griddled oat-cake, with cyder and metheglyn *ad libitum*, and that whatever wine or white bread was at table he kept in his own immediate neighbourhood for his own use and that of a few select friends, amongst whom was perhaps the bard.

Ieuan Du'r * Bilwg was a bard who flourished about 1470. The piece by which he is best known is called "The Red Gown." In this piece, which is highly humorous, and which is addressed to Thomas ap Howel Vychan, a great gentleman, he describes a red gown or robe which that gentleman had presented to him,† dilates upon the grand appearance he cuts in it, and returns thanks for the present.

Howel ab Rheinallt flourished about 1480. An excellent cowydd of his is to be seen in the "Gorchestion" in which he begs a black greyhound of Llywelyn ab Morgan.

A far more celebrated bard than either of these two was Deio ‡ ab Ieuan Du of South Wales, a native of Abertewi, that is, Tewi's harbour, or Cardigan. He flourished during the latter part of the fifteenth century, was in his dawn when Dafydd Nanmor was in his meridian, and like him sang a dirge on Ryce of Tywyn, whose hall he visited and whose roast and probably whose wine he shared. Most of his pieces are panegyrics on particular chieftains, in some of which, and especially in his ode in praise of Cadwaladyr of Machalldref, he exhibits much of Dafydd Nanmor's

* MS. "o'r."
† MS. "by that gentleman," which makes no sense.—[Ed.]
‡ MS. "Teio."

fire and power of versification. As a poet, however, in general he must rank far below that illustrious bard. His cowydd on the death of Ryce of Tywyn is a tame composition compared with the poem by Dafydd Nanmor. Like Dafydd Nanmor he was a chieftains' bard. All his pieces are more or less connected with chieftains. He sings their praises, mourns their death, or sends them cowydds in which he asks presents of them. There is a cowydd of his extant in which he asks a bull from the hands of [Sion ap Rhys].* A graphic piece it is, in which the points of the bull are admirably brought out. There is another and still better, in which he thanks the lord of Is Aeron, Dafydd ap Thomas, for a peacock and describes the appearance of the bird, his ways and peculiarities, even the manner in which his tail trails occasionally along the ground :

> " Trails in a manner much the same
> The garb of some proud courtly dame,
> Or that of friar, who with his broom
> In no great hurry sweeps his room." †

To ask for particular gifts from their patrons or from great people was customary amongst bards. There is scarcely a poet of any note from the time of Dafydd ab Gwilym to the middle of the eighteenth century who has not left behind him some cowydd in which he asks for something from somebody, either for himself or some one else. The great Iolo wrote one in which he craved a hunting-knife ; Rhys Goch one in which he asks for a girdle ; Dafydd ab

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

† Borrow first wrote :

> " Or that of friar who sweeps his room
> In lazy fashion with his broom,"

and a variant :

> " With besom made of gorse or broom."

Edmund one in which he requests six oxen. In the statute of Gruffydd ap Nicholas respecting bardism and bardic discipline there is a clause to this effect: "No poet who may make a piece of poetry to request the gift of a horse, a hawk, or greyhound, or any other valuable, shall sing it, unless the possessor shall give him permission, or shall send the song by a harper, under pain of a fine and losing the gift"—which clause must have been conducive to keeping up the respectability of bardism, by forbidding the profession to pester by song people who might possess articles which they might covet. The latter part of it is curious, as it shows that there was a great distinction made between the bard and the harper and that bardism and harping were two distinct crafts, though it has long been the received idea that bards sang to the harp, whereas they were forbidden to practise it professionally. Several of the ancient bards were good harpers: Dafydd ab Gwilym was a first-rate harper; a poet of some fame, Ieuan Du, wrote a cowydd in which he asks for a harp; but not one of them who would not have as much scorned to play upon the harp for a prize as a poet of the present day, who could play on the violin, would scorn to go about the streets fiddling for money.

CHAPTER XIV

By writing the lives of successive Welsh bards we have arrived at a very important period, no less than that of the great Reformation in Britain. Of that great event it will be necessary to say something. Before, however, speaking of the Reformation, it will be well to devote a few words to the remarkable man by whom it was brought about; a man celebrated by bards and a patron of British * customs; a man whose character up to the present time has never been properly estimated, which has been loaded with every kind of execration by a particular party, whilst the antagonistic one has † never done it common justice. Yet every one who has a will of his own in the world and says and does what he deems proper, caring not whom he offends or benefits, will experience exactly the same treatment as the great man to whom we are now alluding. Those whom he injures will hate him and those whom he benefits will care nothing for him, because, though he benefits, he will not give himself the trouble to flatter and conciliate them.

Henry the Eighth, for of course he is the person hinted at in our preamble, was one of the greatest men whose actions have had influence over the destinies of mankind. He was the instrument selected by providence to accomplish a huge and mighty work, to [do] which almost any one else that ever lived would

* MS. "Briton."

† MS. "have," which has been cancelled.—[Ed.]

have been incompetent. To do that work was required a being in whom was united the King of ancestry the most splendid, whose royal title was so indisputable that not even a Pope could find a flaw in it, and a man with not only the fearlessness but almost the strength of a rhinoceros, who with all these qualities and attributes must by a long series of usages the most flagitious be at last roused to such a pitch of rage and fury that he becomes disregardless of everything save the dictates of his own will.

Just such a being was Henry the Eighth when he began to roar, snarl, bray, stamp, rend, and tear, and cause Pope, King, Kaiser, Cardinal, and all the villainous kibbidge which had so long deceived, robbed, outraged, and laughed at him, to look about them with fear and trembling. O, what a fate was that of Henry! And yet, and yet—was he not a glorious fellow? Yes, he was. A noble work he did and not by halves. But what a fate! But what a fate!

He has just entered upon his eleventh year, when his brother, who in compliment to the ancient Britons had been named Arthur after the British king of old renown, dies, leaving a young widow with whom he had slept and whom he had caressed. Well—but why do we say well? Rather let us shriek, "Unnatural infamy!" The child in his eleventh year is made to betroth his brother's widow. By whom? By that strange man his father; the man who by the help of the Welsh won the crown from Richard at Bosworth Field; that man, that singular man, who, though one of the haughtiest of human beings, would stoop to an act, however accursed, for the sake of gold; who would not pay dear even for the salvation of his soul; who bargained with the monks on his bed of death for two thousand masses at the rate of

sixpence a head. This father, if father he can be called, forces his son to betroth himself to his brother's widow. What are his motives for doing so? Motives? He has just one motive, which is avarice, filthy, abominable avarice. His son Arthur, or rather himself, had received along with the young bride a very considerable dowry, which he is called upon to pay back, as no children crowned the union of the young couple. But the idea of parting with the gold is horrible. What can he do to avoid parting with it? Can he hit on no expedient to avoid doing so? He scarcely puts the question to himself than nothing appears to him more easy and feasible. All he has to do is to bring about a marriage between Arthur's brother, the child Henry, and Arthur's young widow. The dowry intended for the one will do for the other. O, the matter can be most satisfactorily arranged. But will the parents consent to the arrangement? He will try, and so he does, and the parents jump at the proposition. But who are these parents? Jews and Moors, of course, who, it is said, don't object to such arrangements. Jews and Moors indeed! Why, they are the pinks of Christianity, knights and champions thereof, Los Reyes Catholicos, the Christian Kings, in a word, that precious duo, Ferdinand and Isabella, who hate nothing more than what savours of the Moor and Jew, who for the sake of Christ have roasted we don't know how many Jews and have led a war of extermination into the Moorish kingdom of Granada! Why, they hate everything which savours of Judaism and the Koran as much as he hates anything which savours of heathenism, he who in his younger days had served as a volunteer under the Grand Master against Kestut and his Lithuanians. And yet they are nearly as eager for the arrangement as himself.

And yet the arrangement will soon be broken. There is one person who will break it to atoms more minute than the smallest grains of dust, who must do so, whose duty it is to do so, who can't sanction such things, for if he does, heaven will burst and fall down in a shower of stones to crush everything here below. Who is that ? Why, the Pope, to be sure, Christ's Lieutenant on earth, who is here to see that the law of God is not broken. And God speaking to Herod by the mouth of his prophet said : " Thou must not marry thy brother's wife." O, he'll soon set aside your filthy, incestuous arrangement, ye Catholic Kings and thou the volunteer against Kestut ! Only try the Pope, and see what a start he'll give ! And they do try the Pope and a wonderful start he gives, but not a start of horror. It is rather a bound of exultation. He utters a cry, but that cry is not " O Incest ! O Abomination ! " but " Jubilee ! Jubilee ! " Why, the Pope is better pleased with the arrangement than any other of the parties ! He forthwith has prepared and forthwith signs a document to this effect : " I grant dispensation to young Henry, son of the most puissant monarch, Henry the Seventh of England, to marry his brother's widow." And the Vatican all that day rings with : " Dispensation ! Dispensation ! What an excellent arrangement."

Now what was the Pope's motive for acting in that manner ? Why, he will get money by granting the dispensation and, now comes the principal motive, he or his successors will have a rod *in terrorem* over the issue of the marriage. The Pope or future Popes can say, if young Henry's son or grandson presume to disoblige him, " Out upon ye, ye vile spawn, ye are an incestuous, bastard breed. The crown of England does not belong to you. Ye wear it wrongfully, for

ye are sprung from incest." "But was it not a holy incest? Had it not the Pope's dispensation?" "Aye, aye, at the time, but times are changed. The dispensation is revoked. O incestuous, bastard spawn, how our nostrils [rise ?] up at the very mention of ye!" Now what was the name of that horrid Pope? Horrid Pope! Just as if one Pope was more horrid than another! The fellow was called Julius the Second. But let no one think that he was a bit worse than any other Pope either before or since. All Popes are alike in the main. There is no essential difference in Popes, and the name bestowed on one by those who speak truth will do for any of them. His countrymen call his present Holiness "The Pig."

However, there is, thank God, one individual who protests against the arrangement and the dispensation. Who is that? Why, the young widow of course abhors the idea of bedding with the brother of the husband with whom she has cohabited. She is quite old enough to know what is right or wrong, to distinguish what is decent from what is incestuous. No, the protest does not come from her. She is the worthy daughter of the Catholic Kings and has no more objection to marry her husband's brother than she would have had to marry her husband's father, to whom she would have been married, provided he had not had a second son, for had Henry possessed no other son than Arthur, who can doubt that he would have proposed to Arthur's widow, aye, and married her too, with the concurrence of all the parties concerned, especially of the Pope, who would have smiled, though not quite seraphically, on signing the dispensation. The protest comes from young Henry. One day he requests to be admitted to his father's presence. He is admitted and he

stands before the coldest, haughtiest, meanest of men. Young Henry is no longer an infant; he is a beautiful, ruddy, chubby boy, with thick, rich, chestnut hair, and above the height of many a man, though only just fourteen, and above the wit of many a doctor, for he is a first-rate Latinist, has read half a dozen of the fathers, and has Aquinas at his fingers' ends. "Well, young sir?" "O father! I am come on a most momentous matter. I have troubles of conscience." "Troubles of conscience, sir?" "Yes, father, and dreams." "Dreams of a hobby-horse?" "No, father, when I ride, it is on a war-horse. But I don't dream of horses, but of devils, frightful devils, those devils which in the other world punish those who commit incest in this. Father, I dare not commit incest, but you will make me, if you force me to marry Arthur's wife, for Arthur was my brother. And so I am come to tell you that I won't." "Ho, guards, seize this young madman, away with him and let him be scourged." And the boy was hauled away and scourged; but by the next day he had written in choice Latin in which he protested against marrying his brother's wife, and in less than a week he caused that document to be presented to his father.

O, surely, the behaviour of Henry, the boy, in this affair is the most heroic instance of boyish virtue on record. His stern, singular father wishes him to commit incest with his brother's widow, a woman many, many years older than himself, and the boy says, "Nay, father, the thing is incestuous, is damnable. The great Aquinas says that the law of God says so." There's a reply for a boy of fourteen! Yes, it will be observed, but she was much older than himself, and on that account the boy didn't like her. Thou simpleton! much thou knowest of boyish physiology! Why, the most ardent ambition of

ardent boys is to cohabit with women twice their own age. That blooming, giant boy was ardent enough; how could he be else with that frame of his? And yet he abhorred the idea of cohabiting with the woman far older than himself because by cohabiting with her he would have committed incest. Incest he abhorred, though the volunteer against the Lithuanians, the two crusaders against the Moors, and his Holiness the Pope all wanted him to commit it. O, the virtue and courage of boys! Had the young man Henry displayed in the same affair the same constancy and virtue displayed by the boy Henry, how different would have been his career! Aye, different indeed! But would he then have fulfilled the pleasure of God? Would he have inflicted on God's great adversary on earth the fellest blow that adversary ever received? Nay, nay.

Well, the seventh Henry dies and his son becomes Henry the Eighth shortly after he has attained seventeen years. He is about to be crowned. Has he yet actually committed the incest? It does not appear that he has. Then now is the time to take a bold and decisive step. He must say, "I am about to be crowned, but I will be crowned alone. That woman shall not be crowned with me. She is no wife of mine. How can she be? She is my brother's widow. I will not commit incest. I said I would not when I was three years younger. I say so now. If she shares my crown, she must share my bed, and then—horror!" Well, all this Henry does say, his cheeks hot, his eyes full of tears, partly of grief, partly of rage. But there is such a thing as a Council. The Council is composed of bearded men, mailed men, tonsured men, and the Council says, with one exception, "Sir, she is already your wife, and she must share your throne and she must share your bed, *for*

she is the daughter of a mighty King, who is also a religious King, *for* he has roasted Jews and transfixed Moors, and is also a great friend of that sacred person the Pope. You must acknowledge her to be your wife and let her share your throne and bed, else there will be a war; our coasts will be devastated by the fleets from Ferrol and the Groyne,* and there will be an interdict, and we may all be cursed and excommunicated, and we may wake up perhaps and find ourselves all in hell. Sir, you must marry her." "O, don't marry her, sir," shriek'd one voice, "touch her not, shrink from her. She has been your brother's wife. Laugh at threats. Commit not incest." That voice was the voice of William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. But then the mailed men and the rest of the tonsured men arose and they shouted and they roared, and their united voices drowned the voice of the one Christian man, even the voice of the Archbishop of Canterbury. And the young King hesitated and allowed himself to be overpersuaded by the many and to be borne down by them. And the long and the short of the story is that the young King allowed himself to be crowned with his brother's wife and permitted her to share his throne and his bed. And the incest was committed by the two, with this difference—by the young lad it was committed weepingly and repugnantly; by the grown-up woman willingly and greedily.

O, what a fate was that of Henry, doomed to incest when but a child, and, when coupled to his brother's wife and a king, almost instantly from the force of circumstances in the meshes of the Pope, his infernal father-in-law, and that man-beast, Maximilian, Emperor of Austria. O, it makes one weep to see how the brave young King is made to play the

* Corunna.—[Ed.]

game of those three arch-deceivers, those three hoary villains. In 1511, before he is of age, he is mixed up in the horrid league against the good Lewis the Twelfth, the best king who has ever sat on the throne of France. Who gets up that league? Why, the Pope, of course, Pope Julius the Second. He wants to plunder the French King of his possessions in Italy and he gets up the league against him, his two principal confederates being Ferdinand and the Emperor. All three are at peace with Lewis. None of them has any just cause of complaint against him, and yet they enter into a league against him. But they can do nothing without the rich and powerful King of England, who, like themselves, is at peace with France. So Ferdinand, at the instigation of the Pope, tells his young, unsuspecting son-in-law that Lewis is an irreligious monster, who is meditating the ruin of the Father of the Christians, and entreats him to join with other princes in his defence; and the young scholiast, who worships the Pope, forthwith yields assent and becomes the champion of the Pope, who, inspirited, curses the best of kings, deprives him of the title of the Christian and bestows it upon young Henry, and forthwith commences the most unnatural war known in the annals of the world. Within two years the three hoary confederates have achieved all they desire. The Pope has become paramount in Italy, Ferdinand has obtained Navarre, and Maximilian's coffers are full. How have those coffers become full? Has the Pope, has Ferdinand given Maximilian money? Ho, ho, the idea of the Pope and Ferdinand giving Maximilian money! Yet are his coffers full. He has been subsidized by Henry and his coffers are full of gold. He has done little or nothing, chiefly threatened France with the brute force of Austria and has become rich, as one of his

successors, Francis, subsequently did, with the gold of England. And what has the King of England gained? Has he regained Guienne, which had been promised him by Ferdinand and the Pope? No, he has not gained Guienne, which would have been a glorious reward for his exertions. The ten thousand English archers whom he had sent over to Guipuscoa for the purpose of invading Guienne in conjunction with the troops of Ferdinand had been allowed to remain there by that perfidious monarch till half their number perished by the country fever, when the remainder were permitted to return to England. He had never intended that they should march against Guienne in conjunction with his own forces, for he never meditated an expedition against Guienne. But he wished to have the far-famed English bows close at hand as a check against France, whilst he despoiled John d'Albret, France's ally, of Navarre, in the hope of obtaining which he had joined the Pope. And when he had obtained his ends, he allowed the deceived and diminished train to return to their native land. The King of England, after playing the game of the confederates, squandering his father's hoarded gold in subsidies and military preparations, losing thousands of his bravest subjects rather by pestilence than the sword,* sat down, his sole gain the empty title of Christian King. But he had done what it was intended he should do. France in terror of him had recalled her armies from Italy to defend herself—had neglected her faithful ally in his agony, permitting him to be despoiled. The Pope had Italy, Ferdinand Navarre, and Maximilian was rich. O, how merry are the three! The beast Maximilian grunts like the sow when she has found a heap of rich garbage, Ferdinand smiles sourly, and the Pope sings

* MS. not clear at this point.—[Ed.]

with pleasure. All are glad, but gladdest of all is the Pope, who absolutely sings with joy, though his joy is suddenly changed to horror, for turning round his head, whom sees he but Constable Death, who, coming up, says, " Now, old chap, you had promised yourself a further spell of thirty years, hadn't you ? But you can't have it. You must come along with me," and lugs him off as he does the miser in the interlude to his proper place. O Death, O ill-bred Death, how unpleasantly dost thou occasionally interrupt the song of the successful rascal !

Another league, and by the same parties ! There is another Pope, it is true, but what difference does that make ? There is no difference in Popes. And Leo is not a bit better than Julius. There is another league against France—the Pope, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Henry. O, what a fate is that of Henry ! He is again to play the game of the others, to cripple France more than she is already crippled, to prevent her from seeking to recover her possessions in Italy and to find money for the others, who promise wondrous things, but do nothing but receive his money and enter into secret negotiations with France at the time he is manfully fighting against [her]. But money, money. Has he not spent his father's treasures ? Yes, every ounce of his father's gold he has spent, but he can tax wealthy England. And he does tax her, more than she can well bear, to raise money to enable her to send forth splendid armaments and to subsidize the Pope, Ferdinand, and above all, Maximilian, that man-beast Maximilian. But has he no clever counsellor who can tell him how bad, self-interested men are deceiving him ? He has a counsellor and a clever counsellor, Wolsey the Churchman, the butcher's son, who might well be clever, as in his skull by some strange accident were placed all the brains intended

during countless generations for the use of the heads of the children of the county in which he was born, which has since been called "Silly Suffolk," on account of the general stupidity of its people. But Wolsey, though a clever counsellor, was not a faithful counsellor. He might have given the best of advice, but he never gave it. He was almost the cleverest of mankind, but as selfish and heartless as Ferdinand or Maximilian. In a word, he was in every respect qualified for the Popedom, not more, it is true, than Julius, not more than Leo, but qualified for the Popedom, which, however, he never got. This man for a long time was Henry's evil genius. By an inscrutable, wonderful power, which the vulgar called sorcery, and perhaps rightly,* he ruled Henry as he pleased and always for Henry's and England's woe, and for the advantage of the arch-trio, as long as that trio remained, especially of the Pope, in the hope of obtaining from the latter a cardinal's hat, which the Pope at last gave him. Henry, blessed by the Pope, exhorted by his father-in-law, egged on by the cardinal, rushes into the war.

That war, though an unjust one on the part of Henry, was in many respects a glorious war for him. He wins the Battle of the Spurs. That might well be called the Battle of the Spurs. Both French and English used their spurs, though for somewhat different purposes, the English to dash on, the French to scamper away. O, that thundering charge of Blooming Harry and his British chivalry! There had been nothing like it since the time of Arthur and Lancelot; there has been nothing like it since. "Upon them, my boys," roars Henry, in his broadest English. "At them, my children," shrieks Father Ryce in his sharpest Welsh. On they thunder,

* Uncancelled variant "as perhaps it was."—[Ed.]

the spurs are red, the steeds are mad, madder the men. On they thunder, English and Welsh, Welsh and English, but Britons all. On they thunder. Who can withstand them? Not the French, and if not the French, who in the world? Round turn the French, the rowels are red, the steeds are mad, madder the men, but all are flying, all but De Longueville. That day, however disgraceful to the French, was surely a glorious day for Henry and England, and for Ryce and Wales, for well might the bard say:

> "After God and the King that day
> Ryce and his ravens did bear the sway."

Yes, a glorious day was that for Henry, and upon the whole a glorious year. Tournay falls, and upon the day of its fall Harry hears that the scoundrel Scots, who, taking a mean advantage of his absence, had invaded his native dominions, had been routed at Flodden by England's yeomen, and their King slain. But glorious as it was, what might not that year have been for Harry had he marched on? He would have taken Paris and have restored England's sovereignty over the whole of France, and Harry Tudor would have been a more potent monarch than Harry of Monmouth. And who prevented him? Who? Why, the man-beast Maximilian. He, no more than any one of his comrades, had performed a tittle of what he engaged to do. On the contrary, whilst ardent Harry, whom they had hounded on against France, was engaged in humbling her, they had made a secret peace with her, and now the man-beast makes his appearance in England's camp. What does he come for? To prevent Henry reaping the fruits of his valour and to plunder him further. He takes service under Henry for a hundred crowns a day, and constituting himself his counsellor, prevents

him from stirring a step farther. O, that Maximilian! the union of the man, the fox, and the swine in that being constituted something perfectly astounding! Had the present writer lived in his time, he would rather have gone to look at him than at either Ferdinand or the Pope. The Pope, indeed, you can see at all times, for all Popes are the same. But Maximilian! In his latter days he endeavoured to sell the empire to Henry, though it was not his to sell. He wished to retire from the world, he said, and devote himself to *meditation*. He intended to get the English monarch's money, as he had often done before, and then, as he often before [had] done, set up a grunt * laugh. But Henry was wiser then. O, that Maximilian! The writer as a boy used to stare at his portrait in old Emanuel van Meteren's "History of the Netherlands" till his eyes were almost starting. Yes, in his little sleeping-garret, by the light of a rush-light, he would stare over the half-human, half-bestial features of that being's portrait in the huge worm-eaten, oak-bound folio, till his eyes all but started from their sockets.

Henry derived one real advantage from that famous campaign. He made a prisoner of the brave de Longueville at the Battle of the Spurs, who to a certain extent opened his eyes with respect to the character of his confederates. After that campaign Henry was not so blindly confident towards them as he had been.

* One might think Borrow intended to write "great," but as he calls Maximilian a "man-beast," this use of "grunt" is probably deliberate.—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XV

We can now only afford to give a brief outline of the remainder of Henry's life. Through de Longueville he is reconciled to Lewis the Good, who marries his sister but speedily dies. Ferdinand the arch-plotter drops off, and after a time Maximilian, a more curious scoundrel than himself. Other characters appear on the scene, the brilliant Francis, the cold, crafty Charles, the worthy successor of Ferdinand in Spain, of Maximilian in the imperial dominions. Soon ensues the great struggle between the two great rivals, Francis and the Emperor. Each seeks to win Henry to his side, each knowing that with Henry his side * will be the strongest. Henry most inclines to Francis, the chivalrous and manly, Francis, with whom he has tilted on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. But Wolsey, bought by the gold, pensions, and bishoprics of Charles, by whose means he hopes eventually to obtain the Popedom, favours the Emperor, and Charles has Henry, for a time at least, Henry, who, though wiser than he was, is still under the influence of Wolsey's sorcery. In the midst of all this occurs the great German Reformation. The Pope turns pale; he is in danger, but less from the sword than the pen, less from the sword of Germany than the dreadful pen of Brother Martin. Now the Pope at that time was quite as much in need of a

* MS. " with Henry's and his side." Perhaps Borrow meant to say something like " with Henry's and England's help."—[Ed.]

powerful pen to defend his cause as ten thousand swords to defend his body. He soon finds swords, but where is the pen ? The pen is found at last and where least expected, not in Italy, the land of fine writing and grammarians, but in England, rugged and comparatively illiterate England. It was the pen of the King of England, which of all pens most effectually took the part of the Pope, when he was writhing beneath the dreadful strokes of the pen of the Augustine monk. Let no one sneer ! The most powerful book ever written in defence of Popish nonsense was Henry's book, " De Septem Sacramentis." It made Luther turn pale. He was not beaten, it is true, for he was cased in Bible armour, but there were thrusts in that book which he felt. Harry's chivalrous charge against Luther something resembled in its thundering, ponderous vigour his charge against the French on the Pas de Calais, and the result would have been similar, had not Luther had God on his side. Sneer not, Papists ! Your Pope, your God, who of course can't lie, said that Henry, when he wrote that book, was inspired by the Holy Ghost. Leo lied, it is true, lied like a Pope, but the book was the cleverest book ever written in defence of Papal nonsense. O, Henry was a fine fellow, always ready to take the field for those whom he considered his friends. A pity that those whom he considered his friends should invariably have deceived.

Leo dies and Adrian becomes Pope and not Wolsey—Adrian, Charles's tutor, whom Charles makes Pope, though he had sworn to Wolsey to make him Pope, because he had betrayed his master to him. Now see the difference between Henry's conduct to Wolsey and Charles's conduct to Wolsey. Henry, who owed nothing to Wolsey, whom he had

raised from the dust, strove with might and main to make Wolsey Pope. Charles, who owed a deep debt to Wolsey, who had betrayed his master to him a hundred times, would not make Wolsey Pope, notwithstanding his word, his oath, but makes another man Pope. O, Henry was a noble fellow, always ready to stand up for his friends. A pity that he had not a friend in the world! "Cheer up, man," cries he to Wolsey, "you shall be Pope yet, if I can make you. Only serve me faithfully as you have hitherto done and I will stand up for you, though the whole world were against you." "Don't be dispirited," writes Charles to Wolsey, "you shall be Pope yet; it was not quite convenient to me to make you Pope at the last election, but at the next, and there will soon be another, for his Holiness is old, I'll make you Pope. I swear I will. Only go on betraying your master to me." And Wolsey serves his master as he has always done, that is, he betrays him. But Wolsey is destined never to be Pope. Henry can never make him Pope, though he fain will; and Charles, who can make him Pope, never will, for it is written of Wolsey that he is to sell himself to the Devil and be cheated of his reward. The election soon comes and Clement is made Pope, made by Charles, in spite of Henry's frantic, almost superhuman efforts to make a Pope of the man whom he believed his friend, but who had sold him to Charles and to a dozen others, for he was his evil genius. O, what a fate was that of Henry!

Onward, onward! Whilst Popes have died and Popes have been elected, the struggle between Francis and Charles has been going on. Who is to be master in Italy? Francis never, but Charles whilst he lives. The great fight at Pavia is fought and Francis, the brilliant, is the prisoner of his cold and subtle

antagonist, who finally releases him on hard terms, terms which Francis only half performs. But who mainly enables him to perform what he does perform ? Why, his chivalrous foe Henry.* He, to enable Francis to ransom his sons, who were hostages for him, made over to him a large debt due to him by Charles and presented to him the inestimable gem, the flower de luce, pledged to his own avaricious father by the needy Ferdinand.

There is soon an end of Henry's alliance with Charles. The latter has broken his word to him. He on taking Francis prisoner should have placed him in the custody of Henry, according to the treaty, by which he was bound to deliver up every prisoner of importance into his hands. Henry and Francis become friends, with the full consent of Wolsey, who has conceived a sullen spite against Charles for having failed to make him Pope. There are events of all kinds. Rome is taken, and the Pope, who has joined with Francis against the Emperor, is soon a prisoner in his hands, from which he is delivered, mainly through the powerful intervention of the King of England, whom he calls his chief liberator.

And now let us at once proceed to one of the most momentous periods in Henry's life, the time when he sues for a divorce from Catherine. He had been leagued to that woman, but he had never loved her. How could he love her, for where there is sin, how can there be love ? He had been living, cohabiting with her for years, but he loved her not. She was not his wife ; she was his brother's widow ; had been forced upon him by circumstances, but he had never loved

* Borrow originally wrote : " his chivalrous foe Henry, the ally through Wolsey of Charles who has broken word to Henry as all Henry's colleagues have hitherto broken their words to him." All this seems to be cancelled except " the ally through Wolsey of Charles."—[Ed.]

her, never desired her. Catherine had desired Henry, but of course had never loved him as a woman should love her husband, for how can a woman love the man as a husband who is the brother of the man whose wife she has been? She also desired to be a powerful Queen. Therefore, from desire and ambition she had been from the first willing to be united to Henry, and now from ambition and probably from desire was willing that their union should continue. Now which of these two parties is most culpable, the man who commits incest through compulsion or the woman who commits it willingly; the man who though he has committed incest wishes to commit it no more, or the woman who having committed incest wishes to go on committing it? Assuredly Henry's conduct throughout this affair, except in yielding to do what was wrong, to wed his brother's widow, is entitled to high commendation; Catherine's in every respect to utter reprehension. Henry has been called a beast, but a beast thinks and reflects not. Henry did. Henry's conscience often troubled him for cohabiting with his brother's widow. His union with her had been called marriage, but he knew that it was not marriage and he could not but be aware * that heaven frowned upon it, cursed it. For what purpose is marriage intended? Why, for offspring, goodly offspring. The humblest yeoman when he marries wishes for offspring, goodly offspring. How much more the powerful monarch! The powerful Henry had always been desirous of offspring, which should continue the noble line "e stirpe Theodori," but what offspring had he from his union with his brother's widow? Two wretched male abortions had dropped from it. The remaining fruit was what? A being from whom he shrunk with horror, whose

* MS. "be but aware."—[Ed.]

detestable countenance foreshadowed to a certain extent the part which the being to whom it belonged was destined to play in the world—the she-fiend Mary, in many respects the counterpart of Ariosto's direst creation, the female monster sprung from incestuous union with a corpse.* A goodly offspring that for a proud monarch! A goodly being that to whom to bequeath the crown of Britain! But had Mary been as fair in body and disposition as she was execrable in both, she could have been no fitting heiress of the crown. She had sprung from no legitimate union and of course was not Henry's legitimate daughter. It was the knowledge of this fact which principally made Henry wish for other issue. He had the horrors of a disputed succession before his eyes, a renewal of civil wars like those of the Roses. Well might he entertain such an apprehension. Her legitimacy had, before he thought of suing for a divorce, been called in question by the Bishop of Tarbes † and other French Ambassadors at the time they were negotiating a marriage between her and the Duke of Orleans. What strange marriages are sometimes contemplated in this world! Well might Henry wish not only for better but more legitimate offspring! With Catherine he could not have better or more legitimate offspring. Her womb was dried and she was his brother's wife. Well might Henry wish for a divorce from Catherine!

Little need be said with respect to the attempt to procure the divorce. The facts connected with that affair are tolerably well known. At any rate they are to be found in English history. Henry throughout his life had experienced little ‡ but treachery and

* After "corpse" a gap in MS. Evidently Borrow intended to quote from Ariosto.—[Ed.]

† MS. "Tarbe."—[Ed.]

‡ MS. "little from he trusted." This makes no sense.—[Ed.]

deceit from those whom he had trusted, but it was in this affair that he was doomed to experience from those, in whose words he thought he could rely, worse deceit and treachery than he had ever experienced before. Yet by experiencing what he did, his eyes became opened, his terrible fury aroused and himself in every respect a fitting instrument to execute the decrees of God's wrath on the worst foes of God and man. The Pope, when applied to, had no objection to grant a divorce. "Only get me out of the Emperor's hands and I will do anything you want." The Pope was at that time the Emperor's prisoner, and the Emperor was Catherine's nephew. Well, he got out of the Emperor's hand chiefly through the intervention of Henry, and when at Orvieto he says, "I am perfectly willing to grant a divorce, but before I do so, I should wish the Emperor's affairs in Italy to look a little worse than they do at present. Whenever they do so, I will grant the divorce most willingly." There was at that time a confederacy against Charles for the purpose of driving him out of Italy, the confederates being the Pope and the Kings of France and England. Well, the [Emperor's] affairs soon look rather worse in Italy, indeed in a little time they appear to be at the lowest ebb. His army is driven nearly into the sea, being besieged at Naples by Lautrec.* The Pope is glad and quite willing to perform his promise. He says that the marriage of Henry with Catherine was an illegal one, that it is high time to set it aside, moreover, "he grants a decretal bull annulling Henry's marriage with Catherine and allowing him to marry another." This bull he puts into the hand of Cardinal Campeggio, whom he despatches to England. Two legates are appointed to adjudicate upon the affair of the divorce

* Odet de Foix, sieur de Lautrec.—[Ed.]

in England. The one is Wolsey, the other the aforesaid Campeggio, and the Pope has signed a solemn promise, or, as it is called in Roman ecclesiastical jargon, "a pollicitation that he would never revoke the commission he had given to the legates or advocate the cause to Rome." Campeggio arrives in England and shows the decretal bull to Henry and Wolsey. Henry is of course quite satisfied and Wolsey too, for up to the present moment he has wished almost as ardently for the divorce as Henry himself. Nothing now remains to be done but to hold a Court, discuss the case, which is clear enough, and which indeed has already been discussed and settled, read the bull and pronounce the divorce.

See, however, what happens. The army of the confederates does not take Naples. On the contrary, it is baffled and beaten back by the Imperialists and all on a sudden the affairs of the Emperor in Italy appear in nearly as flourishing condition as ever. Forthwith Charles sends a message to his Holiness in very choice Spanish to the effect: "Holy Father and Cavalier, you are going to divorce my aunt from her husband. Now please to mind what you are about. If not, by the life of the crow I—(*por la vida del cuervo Io*——)." And now one word with respect to Charles. Let no one think that the writer is going to say anything against Charles for the part which he played in this affair. The writer honours him for it. It is almost the only thing for which he honours Charles. Charles was a great scoundrel; his word was not worth a rotten straw; he was cold-blooded and grasping, but, but—*he took the part of his aunt.* His aunt was wrong, it is true, but a pitiful scoundrel must he be who would not take the part of his aunt, *wrong or right*, to say nothing of his mother. His aunt did not wish to be divorced, and Charles said to

his aunt, "Well, aunt, you shan't. Let the Pope offer to divorce you and *por la vida del cuervo Io*——." Charles was certainly a great scoundrel, but he was no pitiful scoundrel. He was brave. He showed the most undaunted resolution in Spain during the insurrection of Padilla and the comuneros. He was brave, very brave, and he took the part of his aunt. For his bravery and for his conduct towards his aunt the writer honours him, certainly for nothing else. The Pope, on receiving the above message, shook. He did not like the implied threat, which might mean that Charles would turn Lutheran or burn Rome. His soldiers had plundered it some time before. He did not like the implied threat, and the oath startled him. Charles cared nothing about the crow, but the Pope did and Charles knew that he did so.

On the subject of the crow and the Pope a good deal might be said, but there is no space to say it here. There is an immense deal of the vilest heathenism in the Popish system, derived from the far East, amongst other absurdities a veneration for the crow. Popes venerate the crow. It is perhaps the only thing they do venerate. Thugs also venerate the crow, the form in which their goddess Kali or the black shows herself. Who can say that the Popes do not associate the crow with their Maria Santissima, even as the Thugs do with Kali? Aye, and who can say that their Maria Santissima is, after all, anything else than Kali, whom, by the bye, Papists frequently worship in the shape of a black bull? But to proceed—the Pope was terrified at the message. He repented that he had been so precipitate in the affair; he was quite reckless as to whether he had been doing right or wrong, but he repented having done that which might be attended with fatal consequences

to himself. What he most repented of was having granted the decretal bull, which had been shown to Henry and Wolsey. It had, however, not been publicly read. The Court had not yet been held and sentence of divorce had not yet been pronounced between Henry [and] his wife. No time is to be lost, and forthwith he despatches his prothonotary Gambara to England with directions to Campeggio to burn the bull and to act so that the whole affair of the divorce shall fall to the ground. Gambara arrives, sees Campeggio and communicates to him the orders of the Pope. Campeggio forthwith burns the bull in the presence of the notary and says that with respect to the other injunction he will do his best to fulfil it.

So far so good! However, the Pope has appointed two legates in England, and the oldest and [most] important of these in every point of view is not Campeggio but Wolsey, and Wolsey on various occasions has shown himself quite as eager to procure the divorce as Henry himself. How will Wolsey be induced to permit the affair of the divorce to fall to the ground? Surely, he will not. He has every reason to hate Charles, who has twice deceived him, Charles, who wishes to prevent the divorce, and to love his master, who has never deceived him and who ardently wishes for the divorce. How is Wolsey to be managed? Must not Gambara speak to him? Gambara indeed! What would Wolsey care for Gambara? But surely, if Gambara were to tell him that the Pope wishes him to. . . . The Pope! What does Wolsey care for the Pope? What harm or good could the Pope do him? So who is to speak to Wolsey? Set your hearts at rest. Wolsey will be no obstacle to the arrangement. He has been spoken to already, or rather whispered to, not by the Pope,

but by him who made Popes, whispered to across the length of Castile and Leon, the breadth of Galicia and the Biscayan water, far up into Merry England, even to Hampton Court and into the ears of the Cardinal, and the whisper sounds to this effect :

Hombre. Your worship will please to make yourself of little or no account for a short time, and—be quite safe—I will make you Pope yet.

And Wolsey, when he heard the whisper, was glad, and he forthwith cast aside his grudge against Charles, who had twice deceived him, and he determined to do what he requested him to do, that is, to make himself of no account, though he was by nature the haughtiest of men, and to let Campeggio go before him, though Campeggio was his younger and much his inferior, and to follow in the rear of Campeggio, looking humbly and almost idiotically. Verily, it is said that he made sure of becoming Pope and all through the man of Spain, who had twice broken his word to him in the same matter, and notwithstanding the then Pope was a hale and strong man and he himself was afflicted with what the wise men of his native county call the Sore Trouble, and the men of France the disorder of Spain, to such an extent that his bones and marrow were very much corrupted by the same ; and his breath, as is writ in books, so bad, that when he appeared before his master King Henry to give him advice with respect to his soul and the conduct of the realm, his master the King was obliged to bid him stand at six paces distant from him and to keep before his own mouth and his nostrils one kerchief of silk, brought across sea, to hinder the venom of the said breath finding its way down his throat into his own fair body and corrupting it.

Well, did Wolsey put in practice what he had resolved to do after the whisper from Spain had

reached his ears ? He, the haughtiest of men, followed humbly and meekly in the wake of Campeggio, a junior cardinal, assenting to everything he said and paying him the most abject submission. Still the unsuspicious Henry has no fear of the result, for the Italian legate tells him daily that everything will be done to meet his wish. Well, everything is ripe. The Court meets on the 30th of July, 1529, in the great hall of the Black Friars. An immense multitude throngs the hall. England's noblest are present. The two legates are there. Campeggio, the junior, rises, whilst Wolsey sits still, staring at the wall before him. Campeggio rises, as all suppose, to read the bull of divorce and pronounce sentence. No ! he does not rise to read the bull, which has been burnt some weeks, nor does he rise to pronounce the divorce. He rises to declare that the Courts of Rome are adjourned on that day and therefore he and his colleague adjourn that Court to October the first.

Amazement ! Campeggio sits down and Wolsey continues immoveable, staring against the opposite wall. Presently a thrill of indignation rushes through the assembly, and the Duke of Suffolk, rising, strikes with his clenched fist on the table, saying " That he now saw the truth of the old saying that no legate ever did good in England."

Henry was cruelly stung. He still hoped, however, but not long. The Pope for some time past had been negotiating a peace with the Emperor, and no sooner was the treaty concluded than he advocated the cause to Rome. Yes, he broke his solemn word, for in his pollicitation he had promised that the cause should be decided in England and never advocated to Rome. He even went so far as to cite Henry to appear at Rome to plead his cause. So the Pope not only cheated Henry but laughed at him. He little

knew of the spirit that he was arousing. "Think not every thicket empty," says the Persian poet, "perhaps in one a tiger sleeps."

Terrible was Henry's wrath when aroused, and it is roused now. Yet see in what a dignified manner he proceeds. There is no sudden outbreak, no unseemly ebullition. He has formed an unalterable resolution to set the Pope at defiance. Yet he permits Campeggio to depart without a word of reproach, though before Campeggio left London, Henry was perfectly aware that the cardinal legate was not only a deceiver but a thief; aye, a low, trumpery thief, who richly deserved scourging at the cart's tail through the longest street in London, the old scoundrel having with Wolsey's connivance stolen from his cabinet the drafts of certain letters which he had written to Anne Boleyn, which drafts the worthy legate subsequently deposited in the archives of the Vatican. Yes, Henry, though fully aware of the turpitude of that man, permitted him to depart with his booty and without a word of reproach permitted him to retire to Rome, where he passed the remainder of his day in the perpetration of all those filthy sins so graphically described in the rare and curious book entitled "Il Putanismo di Roma." But no sooner was he gone than down at once came Henry's fearful paw or hoof, call it which you please, on Wolsey. Everybody is acquainted with the circumstances of Wolsey. Now only one word on a piece of hypocritical nonsense, which has won for him the sympathy of millions and will doubtless still win him the sympathy and commiseration of more millions still. "Had I served my God as I have served my King, He would not [have] deserted me in my grey hairs!" O thou hoary sinner, thou didst serve thy King exactly as thou didst serve thy God, and on that

account thy King deserted thee, even as thy God did! Thy King loaded thee with every kindness, with every favour, made thee a greater man than himself and endeavoured to make the[e] Pope, that is God idol on earth, and how didst thou requite him? Didst thou not sell thy kind, confiding, generous master to the Pope, Maximilian,* the man-beast of Austria, and the cold-hearted deceiver Charles, he who could lead thee by the nose even as thou couldst lead thy master, and all because if he had pleased he could have made thee Pope; Charles, whose feet thou wouldst lick even when thy spite was most kindled against him, for after thou hadst made thy monarch declare war against him, didst thou not meanly tell his envoy that thy master had declared it contrary to thy advice? Aye, didst thou, and thy master knew that thou didst, though generous he pardoned thee. Truly, thou didst serve thy master with the same ingratitude which thou didst serve thy God. Thy master put himself into thy hand and thou didst sell him and disgrace him. Thy God put all the brains of thy native district into thy head. How didst thou requite Him? By selling Him, by betraying and disgracing Him, by polluting His temple with thy breath, at the time when the disease of Spain was in thy bones and thy marrow, in thy heart, in thy tongue, in thy liver and thy lung. Truly, thou didst serve thy King even as thou didst serve thy God. O thou worse than Judas! Judas! Judas betray'd his God. Thou didst betray thy God and thy King, nay more, thy friend. But enough of thee, Henry's and England's evil genius.

Well, Henry is undeceived. He now knows that the Pope is a knave and Wolsey no better. How strange that with Wolsey's eminent qualifications for

* MS. "Ferdinand."

the Popedom he should never become Pope! Henry is undeceived; the scales have fallen from his eyes. And now the consciousness of his strength begins to dawn upon him, he shakes himself and feels that he is the strongest of human beings, and from that moment till the day of his death he showed himself not only the most powerful but the most dauntless of human beings and occasionally the most clear-sighted, for who can doubt the sagacity of a monarch who called such men as Cranmer and Cromwell to his councils? A sentence of divorce was pronounced by a commission held at Lambeth, presided over by Cranmer. But no unseemly haste was exhibited in the affair. The following question, which emanated from Cranmer, was first put to the most celebrated universities of the world: "Do the laws of God permit a man to marry his brother's wife?" To this question nine of the most celebrated universities of Europe, amongst which were those of Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Bologna, and Padua, at once pronounced an emphatic "No!" The rest held their tongues. In a word, both Papists and Lutherans were aware that Henry's marriage with Catherine was an incestuous one, and therefore not valid. The Pope might thunder, Charles menace, but Henry, quite fearless, marries Anne Boleyn, poor Anne of Blickling.

CHAPTER XVI

For a moment there was a probability that Henry and the Pope would be reconciled. Francis, with whom Henry had tilted on that glorious Field of the Cloth of Gold, nearly brought about a reconciliation between those two. Francis had considerable interest with the Pope at that time, as well he might have, his son Henry having shortly before espoused Catherine de Medicis, the Pope's niece, the same Henry who at one time was about to be betrothed to England's Mary. France long cursed that union, but if it cursed a union with Catherine, how would it have cursed a union with Mary! Yes, Francis had nearly brought about a reconciliation between the Pope and Henry. The Pope had consented to reconsider the affair of the divorce. The Imperial party was sad at Rome, the French and English party gay. A day was fixed for a decision which, it is well known, is to be favourable to Henry. A letter is only required to be handed in from Henry, declaring that he consents to allow the Pope to reconsider the case. The courier with the letter is on * the way. The Imperial party is sad at Rome, the French and English party gay. Gay too was the Pope, for he will not willingly lose the plunder of England. The day arrives, the Pope is ready, but where is the courier? He has not appeared. Then gay are the Imperialists, the French and English sad, the Pope furious. He confirmed the marriage with Catherine,

* MS. "in."

declaring that with Anne null and void, and within two days is mourning in sackcloth and ashes, for the courier, who had been retarded on his journey by a tempest, has at length arrived. The Lord had determined to rescue England from the grasp of Rome. That attempt at reconciliation merely served to make the breach wider. The Church of England by Act of Parliament is declared independent of Rome and Henry its head. No more Peter's Pence ! A day of mourning for Rome ! Aye, mourn in the dust, old strumpet ! But up she starts again, fumes and rages. And what follows her delirious fuming ? Another stunning blow—the monasteries fall. Hurrah ! the filthy nests, replete with all abominations, fall to the ground with a squash. O, what foul things were then disclosed !

Had Harry Tudor then embraced the Gospel and defended it with the same courage which he did his own insulted dignity, he would have been the greatest of human beings. But he did not embrace the Gospel. Why did he not ? It is difficult to say. Pride perhaps, the pride of the author. He had written the cleverest book ever written in defence of Roman nonsense. He was proud of it ; well might be proud of it ! Would you have an author eat his own words, even for his God, or for the salvation of his soul ? Come, come, do not be too unreasonable ! It is possible, however, that Henry knew little or nothing of the Gospel. A person may know a vast deal of scholastic divinity and be entirely ignorant of the Scriptures. An old Spanish Inquisitor once told the present writer that the Epistles of Paul were addressed to Pope Sixtus.

Henry was occasionally very terrible, towards his latter end, and dealt destruction around him, not only on his foes but his friends. In one of his fits of fury

he cut off the head of poor young Ryce for calling himself FitzUrien in commemoration of his ancestor Urien, the companion of Arthur and Lancelot. That was Henry's worst deed. But the Pope had shortly before promised his crown to any one who would take it. The Pope has always been wonderfully fond of giving away things, which are not his own and beyond his reach. And Henry, who in his latter days suspected everybody, and with some justice, imagined that by adopting the word " Fitz," the boy was laying a claim to the sovereignty of Britain. A pity that some Welsh scholar did not tell him that Fitz and Ap were synonymous, and that if he cut off the head of a Fitz, he was in justice bound to cut off the heads of all the Aps in Wales.

The general idea entertained with respect to Henry is that he was a licentious, brutal monster, who married a dozen wives, all of whose heads he cut off, in fact, that he was the original of Bluebeard. The truth is that he was originally a noble creature, but became at last, through the treachery, deceit, and ingratitude of those he had something to do with, portentous and terrible. Had he been an idle, vicious boy and a licentious youth, he could never have attained the wonderful Latinity and vast stores of scholastic learning which he displayed in his book against Luther. Had he been in after life what is generally called a vicious man, he would never have given himself any trouble about wives, but would have lived in filthy concubinage, even as the second Charles subsequently did. Here let a plain question be put. How many women in England would have said " Nay " to criminal solicitations from Henry the Eighth, had they been made ? He had six wives, it is true, but how many mistresses had he ? Aye, but he was in the habit of cutting off the head of one

wife in order to marry another. He cut off the heads of two. One of them, the one perhaps whom of all he best loved, was a vile, dirty adulteress, even by her own acknowledgment; the other, poor Anne of Blickling, he was made to believe was an adulteress, through the falsehood and perjury of the Papists, particularly of the grey-haired idolater Norfolk, who abhorred her because she had embraced the principles of the Gospel. But then his conduct to Catherine. Well, his conduct towards Catherine as a boy, it was exemplary. As a youth, it is true, he committed incest with her, but in after life he got rid of her. Was he wrong in doing so? Nay, nay. When he repudiated Catherine he did his duty. He had committed incest with her, but on that account was he to go on committing incest with her? What says the liturgy? "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, he shall save his soul alive." Aye, but he ought not to have married again, at any rate not Anne of Blickling. No, no, there is the rub, Anne of Blickling was a Protestant. But what was he to do? That sturdy giant must either live in marriage or concubinage. He preferred marriage. Well, is not marriage, though Charles the Second cared nothing about it, a laudable institution? The ignorant Papists call it a sacrament. Yes, but—— Go to, go to! O, see how God blessed that second marriage. The greatest woman, you may call her the greatest man, the world ever saw, sprang from Henry's union with Anne of Blickling, the woman, the man, to whom England owes everything, who amongst others sunk the Spanish Armada. Compare the produce of that marriage with the produce of the first —two livid, unwholesome boys, who perish almost as soon as born, and bloody Mary, who whipped Protestant children to death and lost Calais. Let

us hear nothing more about his lust; his lust was his lawful desire, and he did not die of [the] Spanish disease like Wolsey. And now for his cruelty. Well, cruel he was in his latter days, after the milk of human kindness, which once warmed his bosom, had been turned into something like adder's bane * by the treachery which he had experienced from Ferdinand, from Maximilian, from Clement and the Cardinal. But certain parties will say surely that certain actions of his were hardly cruel but merely just. The Papists will say that it was a horrible and cruel act of Henry to cut off the head of Sir Thomas More,† but the pseudo-High Church party of the present day will scarcely say so. Thomas More † was executed for denying Henry's supremacy, and the aforesaid pseudo-High Church party can never blame a king for executing a man who denies his supremacy, for didn't their blessed saint and martyr Charles the First cause an Irishman, who was scarcely his subject, for though of Irish parentage he was born in Spain, to be executed in London, because in Spain he had once bitten his thumb (a sign of contempt) at the mention of Charles's name? And though Bible-reading people may say that Henry was a horrid tyrant for burning Bilney, Papists scarcely will, for Henry burnt Bilney for denying transubstantiation. Surely, he couldn't be wrong in doing that? What say you, Papist?

But did he cut off Surrey's head? Aye, aye! and quite right, too! Who that knows anything of the history of Henry's time can doubt that Surrey corresponded with Pole, and that he was at the head of a conspiracy for placing that pretender on the throne? Surrey upon the whole was a contemptible creature, one of those who because they have been a

* Reading doubtful. Illegible.—[Ed.] † MS. "Moore."

little abroad and mixed with foreigners, despise their own country, hate their countrymen, and extol foreigners. Surrey had been a little in Italy and spoke a little Italian. Therefore there was no country like Italy, and no people like Italians. Henry was a bluff Englishman; therefore Surrey hated Henry—Pole a mongrel Italian; therefore Surrey admired Pole. Out upon the emasculated, unenglished dastard! But what had Norfolk done, Surrey's grey-haired father? Henry was going to cut off his head, but died the night before the day of the intended execution. What had Norfolk done? Why, things which deserved something worse than death, on which account he did not obtain it. The writer will say nothing about the crime for which Norfolk was to have died, the attempt to re-establish the Pope's supremacy in England. He will let that pass. Had he done nothing worse than that, he would have lost his head. Providence would not have interfered. But he had done things far worse. Norfolk traduced the fair fame of poor Anne of Blickling; he brought her to the block and endeavoured to bring her to the flames. Norfolk brought about the fall and death of Cromwell, the greatest and most honest minister that England has ever possessed, with, of course, the exception of Palmerston. It was for having done things of that kind that Providence would not allow him to taste death. Death at the time that he was told that he was safe would have been to Norfolk the greatest of all mercies. He was wishing for it, craving for it. Surrey, the only being on earth that he loved, who had been his hope and stay, had perished a few days before. Providence would not allow him to taste death, but permitted him to sit quietly on his stone bench, with ashy cheeks, his eyes upon the ground, his grey hair hanging down in hopelessness.

But Henry's burnings of the readers and preachers of the Gospel, what have you to say to them, Mr. Protestant? What do you say to Henry's burning of Bilney, for example? Why, that Henry was a Roman, and, of course, in matters of religion a bigot and a persecutor. Henry the Eighth burnt Protestants by ones and twos, but did not that pink of monarchs, Henry the Fifth, think,* according to Shakespear, burn Lollards by fives and tens? But there is no denying that Henry in his latter days, when his milk of kindness had been curdled, committed some actions highly unjust and sanguinary. His conduct to young Ryce, the grandson of the man to whom his father owed his crown, who can palliate that?

But he was certainly a wonderful being, learned as a doctor, brave as a lion, or rather, as a mighty boar. O, that book of his on the Seven Sacraments! O, that thundering charge of his on the Pas de Calais! and O, that fight which he had one night in the streets of London with the fiery Welsh swordsman! Did the reader ever hear the story? No? Well, here it is. About the time of Henry's meridian there was a gentleman from South Wales in London, remarkable for his love of brawls and for his skill in handling the sword. Once at midnight he was brawling in Cheapside, when Henry, who was in the habit of perambulating the streets at night along with his watch, came up. The watch forthwith endeavoured to take the rioter into custody, but he defended himself with such skill and resolution that after two or three had received serious wounds the rest recoiled. "Stand still," said Henry, "let me have a turn with the roysterer," and forthwith advanced, sword in hand. The Welshman, who knew nothing of Henry's

* "think," not clear in MS.—[Ed.]

quality, was not backward in meeting him. A long and desperate encounter ensued. At last both were out of breath and stood still, panting and staring at each other by the light of the flambeaux. "By the nails of God," said the Welshman, who was slightly wounded, "thou art a tall man and handlest well thy rapier. Hur little expected that there was any one in London who could draw blood from Rees ap Vaughan." "And by God's blood," said Henry, "I little expected to have found any one this night who would have fought so long with Harry Tudor." "Art thou too a Welshman?" said the swordsman. "Aye, troth am I," said Henry. "Well then, by God's nails," said the other, "I think it no disgrace to surrender to thee, more especially as I am losing blood. Here's my sword." "Keep it," said Henry. "It were ill to take from thee the sword thou handlest so well. By God's blood, thou hast made me pant. O thou rascal, suppose thou had'st kill'd thy King." At the word "King" the Welshman was at once on his knee. Harry bade him rise, took him to his palace, feasted him, and dismissed him with princely gifts. The story ran like wildfire through Wales. The Welsh ever after idolized Henry. "God's nails," said they, "he's a true Welshman." They were rather shocked at his subsequent behaviour to poor young Ryce, but they never forgot the gallantry and generosity which he displayed in his affair with their fiery, fighting countryman, Rees ap Vaughan of Trosyllwyn.

But the most signal evidence which he gave of undaunted resolution was in his battle with the Pope. In that battle he was invulnerable through his fearlessness. Why was he not poisoned? Why was he not stabbed? Why, because he was so terribly fearless that no one durst employ steel or poison against him. It was no joke at that time to beard the

Pope. Charles, the brave and subtle, who did not believe in the Pope, was afraid of the Pope. Francis, the most chivalrous of monarchs (pity that he died like Wolsey of the Spanish disorder), who frequently laughed at the Pope, was afraid of the Pope. Henry, who from his early scholastic studies to a certain extent believed in the Pope, was the only monarch in Europe who was not afraid of the Pope. Harry, when roused, was afraid of nothing. In his battle with the Pope he showed more than the courage of a lion. The lion is not the most courageous of animals. He can be cowed and daunted. But there are some animals which cannot be cowed and daunted. Harry in his battle with the Pope showed the dauntlessness of a wild boar, or rather of a rhinoceros.

Another word for Harry Tudor, ere taking leave of him. Of him could be said what could certainly not be said of another monarch of his time—he was a man of his word. What he promised to do he performed. To use an old Northumbrian expression—he never broke tryst. Now the writer, who is an old-fashioned person, thinks that, which some people would call a mere negative compliment, the highest praise which can be bestowed upon a man. Compare the conduct of Henry's early confederates towards him with his conduct towards them. They always broke tryst; he *never*. The only person with whom he had to do, who never broke his word to him, was Francis—pity that Francis died of the Spanish disorder. Yet even Francis broke his word in the most shameless manner to Charles, who, it is true, broke his word to everybody. Come, Harry Tudor was the only monarch of his time in whose word perfect reliance could be placed.

The bard who sang his dirge was Dafydd Trevor, generally called Sir Dafydd Trevor, who besides being

a bard was rector of a parish in Anglesey, the country from which the race of Tudor sprang, and who, though Henry had roughly handled the Pope, his master, entertained an enthusiastic admiration for the mighty monarch. The dirge, which is singularly beautiful, commences thus :

"O, rhoed daiar ar Harry."
("Come, fling the earth o'er Harry's bones!")

CHAPTER XVII

The Reformation dawned upon Wales. * The people, however, do not appear to have hailed its light with much joy; they were not bigoted Romanists,† but they certainly did not hail the Reformation as it deserved to be hailed. The truth is ‡ that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whilst all the other nations of Europe were in a ferment about religion, the Welsh showed a great apathy about [it]. None had been burnt as Lollards in the days of Henry the Fifth; none of them were trussed up by bluff Harry the Eighth for siding with the Pope in his quarrel with Henry the Eighth; none suffered for the Gospel at the stake in the time of cruel Mary, and none were hanged, drawn, and quartered in the days of Elizabeth for aiding, abetting, and comforting Popish priests sent from Italy and Spain to machinate against the Lioness of Protestantism. The Welsh during those periods were of the religion of the government, whether Popish or Protestant. About the middle of the sixteenth century the New Testament was translated into Welsh by William Salisburie and the

* Before "The people" Borrow inserted "But," perhaps intending to cancel "however." This he did not do, so "But" is superfluous.—[Ed.]

† Cancelled passage after Romanists: "for they looked on with little or no symptoms of regret, when the abbeys and convents were dismantled and the monks and nuns turned out of doors."—[Ed.]

‡ Originally Borrow wrote: "The truth is they were with very few exceptions indifferent as to religious matters, had been for a long time very indifferent to religious matters, were still so, and so continued for a very long time indeed!"—[Ed.]

Bishop of Saint David's and circulated in manuscript; and in the year 1588 a translation of the entire Bible in Welsh appeared in print, this translation by Dr. Morgan, a learned man, Vicar or Rector of Llan Rhaiadr,* in North Wales.† It is one of the best translations ever made of the sacred volume into any language. It was published by authority for the use of churches and continues to be the authorised version up to the present day. For a considerable time its influence over the minds of the people was very slight. Eventually, however, great indeed.

To return to bardism, Griffith Hiraethog is the next bard of whom it is necessary to make mention. He flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century, during the early days of the Reformation in Britain, but it is impossible to decide from those of his works which have been handed down to us whether he was a favourer of the Gospel or of Popery.

Owain Gwynedd, or Owen of [the] North, was a cotemporary of Griffith Hiraethog. He is principally known by an ode on the principle of *wyneb yngwrth-wyneb* or counterchange, addressed to Sion Lewis Owain of the Grove near Dolgellau. Nothing can be gathered from the works which he has left behind to show satisfactorily of what nature were his religious sentiments.

William Llŷn, or William of Llŷn, was a Protestant and held a Protestant benefice, namely, that of Llŷn in Carnarvonshire. His surname is not known. He is the first of the Welsh bards after the time of the Reformation whose works exhibit some indication of that event. The words "Grace of God" frequently appear in his poems, though it must be confessed that in one of them the Popish oath "myn Fair," "by the Virgin," is to be found. He was considered

* MS. "Rhaidr." † MS. "Welsh."

during his time a consummate master of versification, and a piece of his, namely, an "Ode to a Damsel," written in the four-and-twenty measures, is still pointed out as one of the most splendid productions of the Welsh Muse. The power displayed over language in this piece is certainly surprising, but it possesses no mastery over the heart and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find one sweet and tender thought in the whole composition. In this poem there is a passage between which and a certain stanza of a Provençal troubadour there is a striking coincidence. The living bard having complained bitterly that his friend and instructor had been carried away by death, the dead [man] amongst other things is made to say :

> "The eagle of the crag on high
> When comes his day must sink and die ;
> The whale that wantons 'midst the brine,
> However loth, must life resign."

Which lines let any one compare with the following by Bernard Rascas of Limoges : *

* * * * *

The two passages, making allowance for the difference of language, seem almost identical.

Sion Tudor was a native of Anglesey and lived from the middle of the sixteenth to the commencement of the seventeenth century. He is said to have surpassed all the poets of his time in wit and humour, and certainly several of his pieces, particularly one addressed to London, in which city he had been unmercifully fleeced, and another addressed to a miser who resided in a stately mansion with nine chimneys, not one of which was smoking, exhibit a vast deal of what is witty and humorous. Besides wit and humour he possessed a vein of tender feeling,

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

evidence of which he has given in his piece "To Anna." Also much graphic power. There is or was a dangerous whirlpool in the Menai Straits called Pwll Cerys, on which several poets composed short poetical pieces, amongst others the celebrated Griffith Hiraethog. Amongst the best of these pieces is one by Sion Tudor. It contains one line, intended to convey an idea of the dreadful rotatory motion of the water, which almost curdles the blood :

"Cerys Bwll draw, croes-bwll-drwg."

He was a cotemporary of Thomas Price of Plas Iolyn in Denbighshire, a gentleman of considerable property, who, according to the "Cambrian Biography," being of a wild and roving disposition, fitted out a privateer in which he cruised against the Spaniards. Amongst his pieces, which exist principally in manuscript, are several englyns on divine and moral subjects.

A very remarkable person must be mentioned now, even Master William Salisburie, the principal author of "Rhetorick," one of the most curious works in the Cimbric language. He was no poet, but he has done good service to the principal Welsh poets by illustrating every twist and turn of eloquence by an extract from the works of some one or other of them. The work was completed after his death by Henry Perry and was published in 1580, at the expense of Sir John Salisburie, the head of the ancient house to which Master William belonged.

Various Welsh poets sprang up towards the close of the sixteenth century, who gave sufficient evidence that their minds were zealous and hearty in the cause of the Reformation. The two most celebrated of these were William Middleton and Archdeacon Edmund Price. William Middleton, or as he is called

by his countrymen, Gwilym Canoldref (Middletown), was a native of Denbighshire, of an ancient family, and a relation of the Sir Hugh Middleton who brought what is called the New River to London. He was one of the naval captains of the great Elizabeth. His grand work is a Welsh translation of the Psalms into the four-and-twenty measures, which work was performed on shipboard, whilst he was stationed, to use his own words, *apud scutum*. It was published after the translator's death by Thomas Salisburie, one of a family illustrious for benevolence, learning, and patriotic spirit. The work, considered as a poetical composition, is deserving of very high praise indeed. It is noble and stately. Considered as a translation, it is entitled to much credit, for it is very accurate, when allowance [is made] for the difficult measures in which it was wrought. If, however, it is to be estimated by the good it has done or is likely to do in a spiritual point of view, it is a failure. It may be admired by the highly educated Welsh scholar, but it is unintelligible to the general class of readers and consequently unfit for the use of churches, for which it was intended.

The other poet whom we have mentioned as contemporaneous with Middleton, Archdeacon Price, also translated the Psalms, but the translation which he produced differed widely in character from the work of William Middleton. As a poetical composition it is not to be compared with the other. It exhibits little or no beauty of versification, but it possesses the merit, which is the greatest which any translation from Holy Writ can possess, of being perfectly plain and intelligible to the lowest comprehension. It has therefore very properly been preferred by the dignitaries of the Anglican Church in Wales to the beautiful scholastic verses of Middleton, and is at present daily

used in churches, being bound up with the Welsh translation of the Book of Common Prayer. It is executed in what is called Y Mesur Cyfredyn or common measure, which is neither more nor less than the common English ballad measure, the measure which is very wisely used by the songsters of Wesley's sect in their hymns. Edmund Price could, when he pleased, show in his strains almost as perfect mastery over the twenty-four measures as William Middleton himself, but he seems to have been aware that no version of those psalms in those tight and severe shackles could be attended with much spiritual good. He was a great admirer of the Welsh measures—who can fail to be an admirer of them, who knows much about them ?—but he has left behind him his opinion of their difficulty in four immortal lines, which we thus venture to translate :

> " We read the minstrel pieces great
> Of languages no less than eight,
> But never found such straight-lac'd song
> As that of Cambria's lovely tongue."

This last-mentioned poet, Edmund Price the Archdeacon, was a most remarkable individual and cannot be dismissed with the brief account of him which we have given above. There was much in his character to venerate, much to admire, nothing to contemn, but certainly a great deal which any Christian observer must have wished away. He was full of zeal for the promotion of the Gospel cause, laboriously studious, fond of athletic pursuits, untainted with any vice, but much addicted to saying taunting and jeering things, and was one of the most bitter satirists that ever wrote verse. When he once conceived a spite against a person of any consequence, he never desisted assailing him with the

envenomed arrows of satire, until he had made [him] despicable in his own eyes and in those of the generality of his acquaintance. He once entered into a literary duel and killed his man, literally killed him, crushed his spirit, broke his heart, and then lauded him to the skies; as a genuine pistol duellist once said after shooting his adversary through the heart: "Ah! there he lies. I'm sorry for him, for a finer fellow never breathed." Some circumstances connected with this duel we will give and some of the particulars, as they may be interesting to the reader and are certainly not out of place here. In giving them we abbreviate from a Welsh account published in the "Greal."

There was a person of the name of William Cynwal, a gentleman by birth and a poet and herald by profession, who was intimate with an old gentleman of the name of Ryce Wyn. Once upon a time it happened that these two went to see the Archdeacon, whom they found shooting with a bow at a target at the distance of thirty yards. After mutual salutations the old gentleman said, "If I had a bow not too stiff for my age, you should not shoot alone." Thereupon Cynwal said that he had a bow which would send a shaft thirty yards, which Ryce might bend with his little finger. "Aye," said Ryce, "have you? Then I will request my friend the Archdeacon here to make a cowydd to ask it of you, provided you will give me permission." "I will give you permission to ask for the bow," said Cynwal, "provided you will permit me to write the cowydd on the subject and send it to you, for the bow was a gift to me by a friend who brought it from Antwerp." As, however, no cowydd was sent to the old gentleman, he requested the Archdeacon to write a cowydd to Cynwal, requesting the bow, and the Archdeacon

did so. Cynwal sent a letter in answer, that the bow had been lent to a Mr. Thomas Pryce, who was then absent; that when he returned home, he would get it for him, or would buy him the best bow which was to be had in Chester.

After waiting in vain for two years for Cynwal to perform his promise, the old man went with his complaint to the Archdeacon, who taunted the poet "for not being willing to give for song what he was in the habit of obtaining for song," insinuating that he had been in the habit of requesting gifts for himself. At last Cynwal sent a cowydd to the old man and a letter in which he showed his own pedigree, it * being the custom on asking for anything to declare one's pedigree; and as the Archdeacon was always railing at him when he met him, he sent a fiddlebow to pacify the old man and also a note from Doctor Elis Pryce, the father of Thomas, to say that the bow was nowhere to be found.

Then commenced the literary duel between Edmund Price the Archdeacon and William Cynwal. Price sent an answer to the cowydd and letter and William replied to it.† Twelve cowydds of answer and rejoinder passed between them. Then Edmund Price wrote three cowydds for one of William's. William, however, answered them by three others. The Archdeacon then wrote nine for the other's three; but the other, unwilling to be outdone, returned nine for the nine. The Archdeacon thereupon sent a most cutting letter to his adversary, in which amongst other things he told him that he neither understood Welsh nor English and that his cowydds were composed in a jargon formed from both languages, threatening him to answer the nine cowydds by three times nine; and without loss of time commenced

* MS. "in," † MS. "them,"

putting his threat in execution. Just, however, as he had completed sixteen of them, word was brought by a gentleman of the name of Rhydderch that William Cynwal was dead; whereupon the Archdeacon composed an elegiac cowydd in the shape of a dialogue between him and the messenger, lamenting the death of so illustrious a bard.

Such was the termination of an affair disgraceful to all the parties concerned in it, but more particularly to the Archdeacon. The old gentleman, on being disappointed of his bow, ought to have held his peace and concluded that Cynwal had either forgotten his promise or that the bow was not to be found, as indeed seemed to have been the case. He ought likewise to have reflected that at his time of life a Welsh prayer-book was more fitted to his hands than an Antwerp bow. Cynwal, after promising the cowydd and the bow to the old simpleton, ought either to have sent the promised bow along with the cowydd, or the most suitable bow which he could procure at Chester; whilst Edmund Price ought to have acted the part of a peacemaker instead of a stirrer-up of strife, more especially on account of his sacred calling. But he had a habit of taunting and jeering and saying sharp and cutting things, a habit by no means becoming a Christian, and least of all a Christian minister. His dirge on his adversary does him no credit at all. He calls him in it an illustrious bard. If Cynwal was an illustrious bard, why did he ever call him a poor, illiterate creature? But the Archdeacon neither in his abuse nor his laudation spoke the truth. Cynwal was neither an illustrious bard nor a poor, illiterate creature. He was a clever rhymester. The Archdeacon, instead of writing a fulsome elegy on the man whose spirit he had crushed, ought on hearing of his death

to have gone into his church or his closet, flung himself on his knees, smitten his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and on rising to have said, "From this moment with Thy help I will endeavour to correct my wretched, virulent tongue."

CHAPTER XVIII

A VERY different man from Edmund Price was the man whom we have next occasion to mention. He was a clergyman and a poet like the other, but there was a singleness of purpose about him to which the Archdeacon could lay no claim. All his thoughts, all his efforts were directed to the salvation of souls and consequently to the promoting of the glory of God. If he wrote poetry, it was only sacred poetry, calculated to do good, to awaken the rude sinners to a sense of their awful condition, to make them sensible of the loving-kindness of God and to promote peace and good-will amongst men. He never wrote cowydds, like the clever Archdeacon, on matters which did not concern him, tending to widen differences between brethren and to arouse the worst passions of the human heart. He was not fond of rubbing sore places and seeing people writhe and wince beneath the agony he inflicted. On the contrary, he was remarkably fond of pouring oil upon festering wounds. We have used the words, "after he came to his reflection," * for, of course, there was a time when Rees Pritchard, for such was the name of the illustrious individual of whom it is our privilege now to speak, was not good and holy. There was a time, no doubt, when he was vicious and cruel. What child of Adam is not, or has not been so? But he came to

* The expression is not previously used. Possibly the MS. is incomplete, or this is a slip on Borrow's part.—[ED.]

his reflection; he became a converted man, which unhappily every child of Adam does not become. It is said that in his early life he was addicted to intemperance, even after he had become a priest, and that once, being followed into a tavern which he frequented by a he-goat, he gave the creature ale, which it drank greedily, and it became so intoxicated that it fell on the ground, where it lay quivering and gasping.

It is said, however, that Rees Pritchard was so horrified by the appearance and movements of the poor drunken animal that he forthwith renounced his intemperate habits, and became thoroughly reformed and an ornament to his profession. If this story be true, and there is no reason to doubt it, for drunkenness was the reigning vice of the age in which Rees Pritchard lived, it shows that at one time Rees Pritchard was a very bad man but that his heart was open to conviction. No sooner was the filthiness of drunkenness brought forcibly before his eyes than he repented of his drunkenness, set about reforming himself and became a bright candle to the world. What a contrast does the behaviour of Rees Pritchard after the affair of the goat exhibit to that of Archdeacon Price after the death of William Cynwal. Rees strikes his breast, says "God be merciful to me a sinner," and becomes the Candle of the Deheubarth. The Archdeacon, rather proud than not at having disposed of his man, sits down and with considerable self-esteem writes a very fulsome cowydd in his adversary's praise, and continues till the day of his death what the world would call a dignified, respectable ecclesiastic, very much addicted to satire and making people miserable, but a dignified ecclesiastic whom nobody could contemn. But what happens after death? It is to be hoped that both go to heaven.

But at the present day there is scarcely a child of the south who is not taught to bless with his infant accents the Vicar, but what child of Gwynedd ever invokes a blessing on the head of the Archdeacon ? How many of those grown up ever mention him ?

Pritchard was Vicar of Llandovery in Carmarthenshire, in which place, after he had come to his reflection, he preached the Gospel for upwards of thirty years, as it had never before been preached in the Welsh tongue since the time of Saint Paul—supposing the beautiful legend to be true which tells us that Saint Paul in his wanderings found his way to Britain, and preached to the inhabitants the inestimable efficacy of Christ's bloodshedding in *Cymraeg wen*, in the fairest Welsh, having like all other apostles the miraculous gift of tongues—and it was there that the good Vicar composed the most popular volume of poems ever written in the Welsh language, entitled " Canwyll y Cymry," " The Candle of the Welshmen," a work which has gone through almost countless editions. It is written in two common, easy measures and the language is so plain and simple that it is intelligible to the homeliest hind who speaks the Welsh language. All of the pieces are of a strictly devotional character with the exception of one, namely, a welcome to Charles, Prince of Wales, on his return from Spain, to which country he had gone to see the Spanish lady whom at one time he sought as bride. Some of the pieces are highly curious, as they bear upon events at present forgotten, for example, the " Song upon the year 1629," when the corn was blighted throughout the land, and " A Warning to the Cymry " to repent, when the plague of blotches and boils was prevalent in London. Some of the pieces are written with astonishing vigour, for example, " The Song of the Husbandman "

and "God's Better than All," of which last piece the following is a literal translation * :

"God's better than heaven or aught therein,
Than the earth or aught we there can win,
Better than the world or its wealth to me—
God's better than all that is or can be.

"Better than father, than mother, than nurse,
Better than riches, oft proving a curse,
Better than Martha or Mary even—
Better by far is the God of Heaven.

"If God for thy portion thou hast ta'en
There's Christ to support thee in every pain,
The world to respect thee thou wilt gain,
To fear thee the fiend and all his train.

"Of the best of portions thou choice didst make
When thou the high God to thyself didst take,
A portion which none from thy grasp can rend,
Whilst the sun and the moon on their course shall wend.

"When the sun grows dark and the moon turns red,
When the stars shall drop and millions dread,
When the earth shall vanish with its pomps in fire,
Thy portion still shall remain entire.

"Then let not thy heart though distressed, complain!
A hold on thy portion firm maintain.
Thou didst choose the best portion, again I say—
Resign it not till thy dying day."

As a proof of the reverence in which the memory of this saintly man is still held in Llandovery, the following anecdote will testify. One morning in November, 1854, the writer was standing in the middle of the principal street of Llandovery staring intently at a certain antique but somewhat ruinous mansion. Presently a respectable-looking farmer came up and was about to pass, but observing how the writer was

* Blank in MS. The lines inserted are taken from "Wild Wales."—[Ed.]

employed he stopped and looked, now at the writer, now at the house. Presently he said, "A fine old place, is it not, sir? But do you know who lived there?" The writer knew perfectly well who had lived at the house, for after visiting the burial-place of Dafydd ab Gwilym he had walked to Llandovery, a distance of nearly forty miles from Ystrad Flur, for the sole purpose of seeing the house. Wishing, however, to hear what the man would say, he turned a face of inquiry upon the farmer, whereupon the latter advanced towards him two or three steps, and placing his face so close to his that his nose nearly touched his cheek, he said in a kind of piercing whisper, "The Vicar!" Then, drawing his face back he looked the writer full in his eyes as if to observe the effect of his intelligence, gave two nods as if to say "He did, indeed," and departed. *The* Vicar of Llandovery had then been dead about two hundred years.

It was some time about the middle of the seventeenth century that a piece was produced of which the author is unknown. It is an englyn or poem of four lines upon a spider, and consists entirely of vowels * :

"O'i wiw ŵy i weu e a :—o'i wyau
Ei weau a weua :
'E weua ei we aua',
A'i weau yw ieuau ia."

The Welsh are in the habit of saying that no language in the world can show anything like it. They ought, however, to bear in mind that the Cambrian language contains seven vowels, the *w* and *y* not being considered consonants, and they ought also to remember that a consonant has been arbitrarily removed from the word which terminates the third line, namely from *auaf*, an inflection of *gauaf*, winter. It is certainly a curious piece, and it

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

is probable that nothing of a similar kind could be produced in any other of the Sanscrit dialects. A celebrated Welsh poet, however, Gronwy Owen, of whom we shall subsequently have to say a great deal, who flourished about a hundred years after the "Spider Englyn" was composed, appears to have thought that the capacity of the Welsh language for vowel composition had not been sufficiently displayed by a single quatrain. He therefore determined to try whether he could not write what is called by Welsh poets a *proest* to the "Englyn," that is, a continuation or confirmation of the first, and actually produced four additional vowel lines, which certainly have meaning and neither violate the laws of Welsh grammar nor prosody; so that the Welsh at present possess in their language two stanzas of four lines each, which, though composed entirely of vowels, written in one of the most difficult of the Welsh measures, are intelligible and neither violate grammar nor prosody. Of these lines the following may serve as a translation * :

"From out its womb it weaves with care
Its web beneath the roof,
Its wintry web it spreadeth there,
Wires of ice its roof.

"And doth it weave against the wall
Thin ropes of ice on high?
And must its little liver all
The wondrous stuff supply?"

Shortly after the "Vowel Englyn to the Spider" appeared, another remarkable piece of a somewhat singular character was given to the world, whose author is also unknown. It is an englyn on Snowdon, in which there is but one consonant. A *proest* to

* Blank in MS. The lines have been added from another MS.—[Ed.]

this was also written by the learned Sion Rhydderch, the author of "A Grammar of Welsh Poetry," in which all the rules of Welsh prosody are laid down, published at Shrewsbury, 18th April, 1728. The englyn and *proest* are as follows :

"Cold is the snow on Snowdon's brow,
It makes the air so chill ;
For cold, I trow, there is no snow
Like that of Snowdon's hill.

"A hill most chill is Snowdon's hill,
And wintry is its brow ;
From Snowdon's hill the breezes chill,
They freeze the very snow."

The English language has but three or four vowel words, *a*, *eye*, *aye*, and *I*, so that any triumphs in vowel composition in that tongue are impossible. Perhaps the English will say that their language can exhibit something better than vowel triumphs. Well and good, and so can the Welsh. The English language contains intellectual triumphs but no vowel ones ; the Welsh, intellectual triumphs and vowel triumphs too.

CHAPTER XIX

In the year 1622 was born Huw Morus, or Morris, the most popular poet of his time, which was not a short one, for he died at the age of eighty-two after living in six reigns. He was the son of a small farmer and first saw the light in the valley of Ceiriog in Denbighshire, at a place called Pont y Meibion, or The Children's Bridge, named so from a small antique bridge a little way off, which crosses the brook Ceiriog and which was said by some to have been built by children, by others by fairies—beings which, if we may believe tradition, abounded in that neighbourhood, which though lying near Shropshire and Offa's Dyke, is one of the wildest and least known in all Wales. He served an apprenticeship to a tanner in the neighbouring county of Flint, but never followed the tanning trade, which he probably never learned, but when the term specified in his indentures was expired, returned to the house of his father, which he does not appear ever subsequently to have quitted for any length of time. With his father he lived as an assistant farmer, subsequently with his elder brother, and when he had been removed, with his brother's successor, with whom he continued to the period of his death.

It has been said, however, that his hand more frequently held a writing-pen than a plough. He was probably of little use as a cultivator of the farm, but it is certain that he was a very assiduous and

successful cultivator of poetry. Here he composed cowydds, carols, and derries on various subjects, and speedily became so celebrated that he was called Eos Ceiriog or the Nightingale of Ceiriog, not only in his immediate neighbourhood but wherever the Welsh language was spoken; and the songs of the farmer's son of the wild Denbigh glen were as popular in the halls and cottages of Wales as the minstrelsy of the Ayrshire ploughman was a century and a half subsequently in those of Scotland.

Though Huw was called a nightingale, it must not be supposed that his habits in every respect resembled those of that lonely, melancholy bird. Like the nightingale he was in the habit of composing very agreeable songs amidst the rocks and thickets of Glen Ceiriog, but with those songs the similarity between him and the bird ended. He was very fond of company, and not very serious company either, at any rate till he had attained a very advanced age, but roaring, jovial company, and he had plenty of opportunities of gratifying his love for it, for Huw Morus was welcome wherever merrymaking was going on in the neighbourhood, whether in the mansion of the great and wealthy or the humble homestead. One night he might be found at Pont Madog at the bridal of the daughter of Rees ap Jenkins ap Jones the farmer, and drinking ale and metheglyn [and] singing englyns and carols suited to the occasion; and the next at Porkington near Oswestry, tippling claret with the old Squire, extemporising verses in praise of wine, or perhaps quaffing bubbling champagne at Castell y Waen, the Castle of the Meadow or Chirk Castle, reciting in a cowydd the pedigree of his entertainer, perhaps the very same person who so valiantly defended that princely house against the Roundhead, and was rewarded for his bravery by

Drinking Charles after the Restoration by a superbly fitted-up ebony dressing-case, said to have cost four thousand spade guineas.

When the war between Charles and the Parliament broke out, the Welsh in general sided with the King and the Church against the Parliament and the dissenters. Huw Morus was a zealous loyalist and Church of England man, and did the best in his power to support the cause to which he was attached. We never heard that he struck a blow for it. He once brought home the sword of a Cromwellian officer, which is yet to be seen hanging over the mantelpiece, not at the house of Pont y Meibion, but of another tenement which belonged to his father, at a short distance to the north of that place, but he did not win it in mortal combat but took it from the dead, cold hand of the Roundhead whom he found lying slain on the mountain some little time after the capture of Chirk Castle. He did, however, all that could be expected from a poet. He composed songs and carols in which he spoke up for Church and King and abused their adversaries—in fact, did for Charles, his son, and the Church what Iolo Goch did for Glendower and the Cambrian cause. His songs were clever [and] cutting, and had great influence over his countrymen. When the Royalist cause was lost, for a time he still carried on a poetical war against the successful party, but not so openly as before, dealing chiefly in allegories, which, however, were easy enough to be understood. It is rather singular that he never suffered for his principles, more especially as certain Royalist poets of the time who wrote Welsh were driven from their homes and their property confiscated. Perhaps, however, the explanation of this seeming anomaly may be in the following fact. The other poets had houses and property ; Huw had

neither. He was an assistant farmer to his father, who was not in opulent circumstances and does not seem to have troubled himself much with politics. Huw had nothing to lose and "it's ill takking the breeks from a Hielandmon," as the Roundheads knew.

No sooner had Monk declared for the King than Huw wrote a song which ran like wildfire through Wales, namely, "The Dirge of Oliver's Men," a clever, pungent piece of vituperation on a fallen but still dreaded party. Our poet lived no doubt a merry life for some time after the Restoration, like the rest of his party, who considered that they could not better display their loyalty and attachment to their King and their Church than by fiddling, singing, and getting mellow. He was always loyal and loving to Charles the Second and would have been as loyal and loving to the second James. When, however, that monarch endeavoured to overturn the Church of England, he renounced him, like all the sensible part of the community, and wrote as fiercely against the wretched bigot and the Pope and his images as he had ever written against Oliver and Dissent. When the Prince of Orange arrived he flung up his old cap and subsequently wrote glorious verses on the many glorious events of the reign of that best of princes, whom he survived, dying in the reign of good Queen Anne. The latter days of his life were irreproachable and holy, and a kind of halo surrounded him. Behold what one of his biographers says of him: "In many country churches in Wales, the congregation went out, at the conclusion of the service, in a regular procession, according to an adopted scale of precedence; but such was the respect in which Huw Morus was held in his parish church, that the vicar, who by custom was used to lead out his flock, could not be prevailed

upon to take the precedence of the highly gifted Bard." *

He was buried in the graveyard of Llan Silin, the church to and from which he was in the habit of walking every Sunday till within a few weeks of his death, though it is five miles distant from Glyn Ceiriog and the road to it lies over the cold, bleak Berwyn. There is a broad flagstone over his grave which once bore an inscription, the whole of which is illegible save the figures 1709. Upon this flagstone, which is close under the south-east wall of the church, little boys of the village frequently play, and when tired with play, not infrequently sit and repeat an englyn, composed by the man who sleeps below about four hours before he died :

> " Now to my rest I hurry away,
> To the world which lasts for ever and aye,
> To Paradise, that beautiful place,
> Trusting alone in the Lord of grace."

He wrote chiefly in common measures. Many of his political pieces are wonderfully clever, but his best poem is an elegy on the death of Barbara Middleton of the Plas Newydd, Llan Silin. It was written by the bard when he was in his seventy-third year.

* The MS. gives only the words, " In many country churches in Wales." The rest has been added.—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XX

So much for Huw Morus, a zealous and consistent member of the old-fashioned Church of England, a Church which Master Ellis Wyn seems to think is the safest Church which anybody can belong to. It stands, says that singular personage, at about the same distance from Rome as from Geneva. Master Ellis Wyn! The English public already knows something of Master Ellis Wyn. He is frequently mentioned in the book "Lavengro," a book which every person has read and most people have abused, because it contains no claptrap, is written in a free and independent style, and above all because it exposes the miserable rage for gentility so prevalent amongst all classes of the English. Master Ellis Wyn was born about the year 1670, was a North Welshman of a respectable family and bred up to the profession of medicine, which for a considerable time he followed in the ancient town of Bristol. Very few of the particulars of his life have been handed down. He is chiefly known as the author of a work called "The Sleeping Bard, or Visions of the World, Death, and Hell." It is divided into three parts, devoted to three separate and distinct visions which the bard pretends to have seen at three different times in his sleep. In assuming the title of Sleeping Bard, Ellis committed a kind of plagiarism, as it originated with a certain poet who flourished in the time of the

Welsh princes some nine hundred years before he himself was born, and to his plagiarism he humorously alludes in a scene of one of his visions. The visions are described in prose, but each is followed by a piece of poetry containing a short gloss or comment upon it. The prose is graphic and vigorous almost beyond conception; the poetry wild and singular, each piece in a different measure, two of the measures quite original, to be observed nowhere else.

The first vision is the Vision of the World, in which the object of the bard is to describe the follies, vices, and crimes of the human race, more especially those of the natives of the British Isles. In his sleep he imagines that he is carried away by fairies and is in danger of perishing owing to their malice, but is rescued by an angel, who informs him that he has been sent by the Almighty with orders to give him a distinct view of the world. The angel after a little time presents him with a telescope through which he looks and sees a city of a monstrous size, with thousands of cities and kingdoms within it, and the great ocean like a moat around it, and other seas like rivers intersecting it.

This city is of course the world. It is divided into three magnificent streets. These streets are called respectively the streets of Pride, Pleasure, and Lucre. In the distance is a cross-street, little and mean in comparison with the others, but clean and neat and on a higher foundation than the others, running upwards towards the east, whilst the other three all sink downwards towards the north. This street is the street of true religion. The angel conducts him down the three principal streets and procures him glances into the inside of various houses. The following scene in a cellar of what is called the Street of Pleasure goes far to show that the pen of Ellis Wyn at

low description was not inferior to the pencil of Hogarth :

" From thence we went to a place where we heard a terrible noise, a medley of striking, jabbering, crying and laughing, shouting and singing. ' Here's Bedlam doubtless,' said I. By the time we entered the den the brawling had ceased. Of the company one was on the ground insensible, another in a most deplorable condition, another was nodding over a hearthful of battered pots, pieces of pipes, and oozings of ale. And what was all this upon inquiry but a carousal of seven thirsty neighbours—a goldsmith, a pilot, a smith, a miner, a chimney-sweeper, a poet, and a parson, who had come to preach sobriety and to exhibit in himself what a disgusting thing drunkenness is. The origin of the last squabble was a dispute which had arisen among them about which of the seven loved a pipe and flagon best. The poet had carried the day over all the rest with the exception of the parson, who out of respect for his cloth had the most votes, being placed at the head of the jolly companions, the poet singing :

" ' O, where are there seven beneath the sky
Who with these seven for thirst can vie ?
But the best for good ale these seven among
Are the jolly divine and the son of song.' "

After showing the bard what is going on in the interior of the houses of the various streets and in the streets themselves, the angel conducts him to the various churches of the city of perdition, to the temple of paganism, to the mosque of the Turk, to the synagogue of the Jew, showing and explaining to him what is going on within them ; then to the church of the Papists, which the angel is made to call very appropriately " the church which deceiveth the nations." Some frightful examples are given of the

depravity and cruelty of monks and friars. The dialogue between the confessor and the portly female who had murdered her husband, who was a member of the Church of England, is horrible but quite in keeping with the principles of Popery; also the discourse which the same confessor [has] with the young girl who had killed her child, whose father was a member of the monastery to which the monk belonged. From the Church of Rome they go to the Church of England. It is lamentable to observe what an attached member of the Church of England describes as going on within the walls of a Church of England temple a hundred and fifty years ago. Would that an equally attached member of that Church was not compelled to say that what Ellis states is quite applicable to what is passing within the walls of many a Church of England temple on a Sunday at the present time! "'Come in here,' said the angel, 'and you will see something more.' Thereupon he carried me to the gallery of one of the churches in Wales, and lo! some were whispering, talking, and laughing; some looking upon the pretty women; others were examining the dress of their neighbours from top to toe; some were pushing themselves forward and snarling at one another about rank; some were dozing; others were busily engaged in their devotions, but many of these were playing a hypocritical part." *

The angel finally conducts him to the small cross-street, that of true religion, where of course everything is widely different from what is found in any of the other streets, where, to use the words of the author, "there was no fear but of incensing the King, who was more ready to forgive than be angry with his subjects,

* A blank is left in the MS. for this quotation, which has been taken from Borrow's translation of "The Sleeping Bard."—[Ed.]

and where there was no sound but psalms of praise to the Almighty."

The second is a Vision of Death in his palace below. The author's aim in this vision is less apparent than in the preceding one. Perhaps, however, he wishes to impress upon people's minds the awfulness of dying in an unrepentant state, from the certainty in that event of the human soul being forthwith cast headlong down the precipice of destruction. The bard is carried away by Sleep to the chambers "where were some people crying, others screaming, some talking deliriously, some uttering blasphemies in a feeble tone, others in great agony with all the signs of dying men, and here and there one after a mighty shout becoming silent." He is then carried to a kind of Hades, his account of which we shall transcribe,* as in that place he pretends to have met with his protonym and two other Welsh poets, one of whom is Taliesin, who is represented as watching the witch Ceridwen's cauldron even as he watched it of old.

The bard is subsequently conducted to the palace of Death, where he sees the King of Terrors swallowing human flesh and blood, who after a time sets himself on a terrific throne and passes judgment on various prisoners newly arrived. Amongst those brought to the bar was a certain King near to Rome, by whom is probably meant Louis the Fourteenth, who is dealt with in the following manner: "'Hold up your hand, prisoner,' said one of the officers. 'I hope,' said he, 'that you have better manners and favour to show to a king.' 'Sirrah,' said Death, 'why did you not keep on the other side of the gulf where all are kings? On this side there is none but myself, and another down below, and you will soon see that neither he nor I will rate you according to the degree of your

* Borrow did not do so.—[Ed.]

majesty, but according to the degree of your wickedness, in order to adapt your punishment to your crimes; therefore answer to the interrogation.'

"'Sir,' he replied, 'I would have you know that you have no authority to detain me, nor to interrogate me, as I have a pardon for all my sins under the Pope's own hand. On account of my faithful services, he has given me a warrant to go straight to Paradise, without tarrying one moment in Purgatory.' At these words the King and all the haggard train gave a ghastly grin, to escape from laughing outright; but the other, full of wrath at their ridicule, commanded them aloud to show him the way. 'Peace, thou lost fool!' cried Death, 'Purgatory lies behind you, on the other side of the wall, for you ought to purify yourself during your life; and on the right hand, on the other side of that gulf, is Paradise. But there is no road by which it is possible for you to escape, either through the gulf to Paradise, or through the boundary wall back to the world; and if you were to give your kingdom (supposing you could give it), you would not obtain permission from the keepers of those doors to take one peep through the keyhole. It is called the irrepassable wall, for when once you have come through you may abandon all hope of returning. But since you stand so high on the books of the Pope, you shall go and prepare his bed, beside that of the Pope who was before him, and there you shall kiss his toe for ever, and he the toe of Lucifer.'

"Immediately thereupon, four little deaths raised the poor King up, who was by this time shivering like the leaf of an aspen, and snatched him out of sight like lightning." *

* A blank is left in the MS. for this quotation, which is inserted from Borrow's translation of "The Sleeping Bard."—[Ed.]

It is to be remarked that all the souls introduced in this vision are those of bad people, with the exception of those of the poets which the bard meets in limbo. A dark intimation, however, is given that there is another court and palace where Death presides under a far different form, and where he pronounces judgment over the souls of the good. There is much in this vision which is very difficult to understand. The gloss or commentary is to the following import :

> " Leave land and house we must some day,
> For human sway not long doth bide ;
> Leave pleasures and festivities,
> And pedigrees, our boast and pride.
>
> " Leave strength and loveliness of mien,
> Wit sharp and keen, experience dear ;
> Leave learning deep, and much lov'd friends,
> And all that tends our life to cheer." *

The last vision, that of Hell, is the longest. There is continual war in Hell ; there is at one time a terrible disturbance and outbreak, the origin of which was a dispute between the Papists, the Mahometans, and the bloody-minded Roundheads as to which had done most service to the cause of Hell, the Koran, the creed of Rome, or the Solemn League and Covenant. Lucifer is only able to quell this disturbance, during which Mahomet and Pope Julius assault each other with tooth and nail, by causing his old picked soldiers, the champions of Hell, to tear the combatants from each other. Amidst interruptions like these the debate proceeds. Lucifer at last declares that it is by love of Ease that his views are to be accomplished, and exclaims to his potentates, amongst whom are Mammon, Pride, Inconsiderateness, Wantonness,

* Inserted from Borrow's translation of " The Sleeping Bard." —[Ed.]

and the Demon of Tobacco, "Ease is my terrestrial deputy; follow her to Britain and be as obedient to her as to our royal majesty." Then comes the finale.*

"At this time the huge bolt was shaken, and Lucifer and his chief counsellors were struck to the vortex of extremest Hell; and oh, how terrible it was to see the throat of Unknown opening to receive them."

The above is an outline of the work of Ellis Wyn, as remarkable a production as any language can show. In it there is a singular mixture of the sublime and the coarse, of the terrible and ludicrous, of religion and levity, of the styles of Milton, of Bunyan and Quevedo. There is also much in it that is Welsh and much that may be said emphatically to belong to Ellis Wyn alone. The book is written in the purest Cambrian, and from the time of its publication has enjoyed extensive popularity in Wales. It is, however, said of it that the perusal of it has not infrequently driven people mad, especially those of a serious and religious turn. The same is said in Spain of the life of Ignatius Loyola. Peter Williams in "Lavengro," the Welsh preacher who entertained the opinion that he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, is frequently mentioning the work of Master Ellis Wyn. Amongst other things he said of it that he took particular delight in its descriptions of the torments of hell. Ellis Wyn was a staunch member of the Church of England, whose principles, he says, if followed up, are more likely to carry a man to salvation than those of any other Church, but he has exposed with a terrible pen the inconsistencies and follies of many of the members of that Church. A translation of

* It is not given in the MS., but a passage is here added from Borrow's translation.—[Ed.]

"The Sleeping Bard" exists in English, but in manuscript only. It was made by the writer in the year 1830, at the request of a little Welsh bookseller of his acquaintance, who resided in the fashionable neighbourhood of Smithfield. On the eve of committing it to the press, the heart of the Cambro-Briton failed him. "Were I to print it," said he, "I should be ruined. The terrible descriptions of vice and torment would frighten the English public out of its senses, and I should be prosecuted by Sir James Scarlett. I am much obliged to you, but, Myn Diawl! I had no idea till I read him in English that Ellis Wyn had been such a terrible fellow." So the translation of "The Sleeping Bard" only exists in manuscript.*

* It was published in 1860. Evidently these lines were written before that date.—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XXI

Lewis Morris was a native of Anglesey and was born in the year 1700. Anglesey, or Mona, has given birth to many illustrious men, but few upon the whole more entitled to honourable mention than himself. From a humble situation in life, for he served an apprenticeship to a cooper, he raised himself by his industry and talents to affluence and distinction, became a landed proprietor in the county of Cardigan and inspector of the royal domains and mines in Wales. Perhaps a man more generally accomplished never existed. He was a first-rate mechanic, an expert navigator, a great musician, both in theory and practice, and a poet, whenever he pleased to invoke the true Muse, of singular excellence. Of him it was said, and with truth, that he could build a ship and sail it, frame a harp and make it speak, write an ode and set it to music; yet that saying, calculated to bestow immortality upon any man, is far from expressing all the vast powers and acquirements of Lewis Morris. Though self-taught he was confessedly the best Welsh scholar of his time and well-versed in all the cognate dialects of the Welsh, the Cornish, Armoric, Highland Gaelic, and Irish. He was likewise well acquainted with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, had studied Anglo-Saxon with some success and was a writer of bold and vigorous English. He was besides a good general antiquary, and for knowledge of ancient Welsh customs, traditions, and

superstitions he had no equal. Yet all has not yet been said which can be uttered in his favour. He had noble qualities of mind entitled to far higher praise than any accomplishments connected with intellect or skill. Amongst these was his noble generosity and sacrifice of self for the benefit of others. Weeks and months he was in the habit of devoting to the superintendence of the affairs of the widow and fatherless. One of his principal delights was to assist merit, to bring it before the world, and to procure for it its proper estimation. It was he who first discovered the tuneful genius of blind Parry; it was he who first put the harp into his gifted hand; it was he who first gave him scientific instruction; it was he who cheered him with encouragement and assisted him with gold. It was he who instructed the celebrated Evan Evans, the correspondent of Gray, to whose translations from the British the world is to a certain extent indebted for "The Bard," in the ancient language of Wales, enabling that talented but eccentric individual to read the pages of the Red Book of Hergest * as easily as if it had been those of the Welsh Bible. It was he who corrected his verses with matchless skill, refiling and polishing them till they became well worthy of being read by posterity. It was he who gave him advice which, had it been followed, would have made the Prydydd Hir, as he called † himself, one of the most illustrious Welshmen of the last century; and it was he who first told his countrymen that there was a youth of Anglesey whose genius, if properly encouraged, promised fairly to rival that of Milton. One of the most eloquent letters ever written is one by him in which he descants upon the beauties of certain poems by Gronwy Owen, the latent genius of whose early boyhood he had

* MS. "Hengwrt." † MS. "caused."

observed, whom he clothed, educated, assisted through ordination, and whom he finally rescued from a state bordering on starvation in London, procuring for him an honourable appointment in New England—Gronwy Owen, the third of the Master Bards of Wales, only inferior to Ab Gwilym and the old war-songster of Glendower. O, the writer could find it in his heart to write a whole book on the Lion of Anglesey, as he was called, but he requires none. As his pupil, the great Gronwy, said in an ode on his death, written in the four-and-twenty measures in the wilds of Virginia, at a period when the illustrious bard had not heard a word of Welsh for twenty years :

" As long as bardic lore shall last, science and learning be cherished, the language and blood of the Britons undefiled, song be heard on Parnassus, heaven and earth be in existence, foam be on the surge, and water in the river, the name of Lewis Morris of Môn shall be held in grateful remembrance." *

It is now incumbent upon us to say something in particular of his poetry, of which he left a good deal behind him. In his poetry he does not invariably appear to much advantage. It is with shame and sorrow we state that this Lewis Morris, this noble, high-minded, talented man, was rather addicted to writing licentious poetry. His motive for doing so is almost inconceivable, for his morals in general appear to have been irreproachable. Yet such the fact is. His " Bugail Tregaron " or " Pastor of Tregaron," is a disgraceful [production] and some others of his compositions contain passages of a character which might well make a harlot blush.

* In the MS. Borrow has merely written " As long." The rest has been added from " Wild Wales," where the same quotation is given.—[Ed.]

Perhaps the low and coarse society with which he mingled in the early part of his youth may have in some degree vitiated his taste. When he pleased, however, as has already been hinted, he could write pieces faultless both as regards subject and execution. The cywydd in which he despatches the snail with a message to Richard Bulkley of Anglesey is a piece full of wit, humour, learning, and beautiful description. His cywydd to the frost and snow and the one to the birch-tree exhibit much of the manner of Dafydd ab Gwilym, and his "Ode to Merion" deserves all the popularity which it has obtained in Wales, which is immense :

> "Though it has been my fate to see
> Of gallant countries many a one,
> Good ale and those who drank it free,
> And wine in streams that seem'd to run,
> The best of beer, the best of cheer
> I've found in County Merion."

The latter part of his life was spent at Penbryn y Barcud, or The Top of the Hill of Falcons, a romantic residence in Cardiganshire which devolved to him on the death of his second wife. From this place he corresponded with some of the most eminent men of his time on various subjects, especially on British antiquities, natural history, and bardic poetry. In one of his letters to Pegge, the antiquary, on this last subject there is a passage which speaks forcibly of the difficulties which beset the path of him who devotes himself to the study of the poetry of the bards. The celebrated Macpherson, rather inflated with the success of his translation from Ossian, having observed in one of his prefaces that he hoped to give to the world some translations from the Welsh bards, and that any person acquainted with one dialect of the Celtic could easily understand whatever

was written in any other, Lewis Morris, after ridiculing the idea of Macpherson's being competent to translate bardic poetry, says that he himself, though born a Welshman and accustomed from his youth to the study of ancient Welsh poetry, never in his old age took up a volume of the old bards without finding something which was new to him and hard to be understood. Two of his letters on the subject of Welsh superstitions, in some of which he firmly believed, were printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

He was a person of great simplicity of manners and, unlike the generality of those who rise to affluence and celebrity from a humble sphere of life, was by no means ashamed of his original humble circumstances. Some few years before his death, in commemoration of his apprenticeship to a cooper, he worked and hooped a puncheon and sent it as a present to a neighbouring gentleman of his acquaintance.

CHAPTER XXII

The man of whom we have now to speak was a very great poet, a learned, accomplished man and a pious clergyman, but as remarkable for misfortunes as for genius, learning, and piety. He is at present considered one of the brightest glories of his native land, yet certain it is that during a considerable portion of his lifetime he in vain strove to obtain bread and a home in his native land, and was at last obliged, to obtain those requisites, to cross the billows of the sea to Virginia, in a paltry town of which he died, after drudging many years as a schoolmaster, entirely unappreciated and little known.

Gronwy Owen was born in Mona, or Anglesey. Mona, in spite of the praises lavished upon it by bards, is not a beautiful island. Beaumaris is beautiful, it is true, but Beaumaris no more constitutes Anglesey than does one swallow a summer. People have a right to call it Ynys Gadarn, the island of the strong, for an immense number of brave men have been produced in Anglesey. People have a right to call it the island of the poet :

"Brodir gnawd ynddi Brydydd,"

for it has produced more bards than any district in Wales. People have a right to call it a plenteous island—it produced plenty of very fair corn and barley, and as for butter and cheese . . .* People may well speak in commendation of its black cattle ;

* A blank in MS. apparently for a quotation.—[Ed.]

its breed of cattle was always first-rate, though there is a tradition that in a certain year all its cattle died. It abounds with fat and goodly hogs, which have long been in great request with the Gents, *alias* pig-dealers, of Wolverhampton; but though the writer is prepared to go the whole hog in lauding Anglesey for its brave men, its bards, its *bara a chaws*,* its breed of black cattle and white porkers, he will not praise Anglesey for beauty. It is decidedly not a beautiful island, on the contrary, as ugly a one as the writer has ever seen, who has seen a great many—no more to be compared with its sister and namesake Mona, or Man, than a common pebble is to a diamond stone. So in the most ugly, unhappy-looking spot in this very plain-looking island, namely, in the parish of Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf, which is at its north-eastern extremity, was Gronwy Owen born some time in the year 1722, in a house called at present the Tafarn Goch, or Red Tavern, called so no doubt because at one time it was made use of as a tavern, though at what particular period nobody can say; which house is now inhabited by an ancient woman and her grandchildren who claim some affinity with Gronwy, or as they call him, Grono Owen.

There are no data from which we can determine the exact station in life of his parents, but there is every probability that they were people of humble circumstances. The name of his father was Owen Gronwy, with the singular addition of Eurych, which may be a nickname or significant of his trade, for it signifies either goldsmith or tinker. There is no improbability in supposing that he may have been a tinker or that he united the trade of tinker with that of husbandman. Gronwy had a brother and sister and was the eldest of the three; Gronwy was a small

* MS. "y caws." A good example of Borrow's slipshod Welsh. —[Ed.]

child and a small man, at least as regards stature. His countenance was very dark and * swarthy, on which account he was in the habit of calling himself and being called by others Gronwy Du, Black Gronwy, and Gronwy Gethin, Dun, dusky Gronwy. The circumstance of his being of a dusky countenance corroborates slightly the opinion that he was of caird or tinker extraction. His parents, though poor, were able to send him to school for a time. He says in one of his letters that he was sent to a school from which he ran away. His father would have beaten him, but was restrained by his mother, who persuaded the child to go back to the instructor. The parents, however, do not seem to have been able or willing to keep him at school long. When he was about ten years of age he was wandering idle, wild, and ragged about the neighbourhood, sometimes swinging on gates and sometimes bestriding hogs. But he had already given not only proofs of cleverness but of genius. He could read well, and if any one uttered to him a line of poetry, could instantly produce one which would rhyme to it. He had the *awen*, the flow of song, the power of extempore composition. Now came an important period of his life. One cold March day as he was wandering about the neighbourhood he came to the door of a public-house ; the ostler was standing by the stepping-block, holding a lean horse, saddled and bridled, with a small, ancient-looking portmanteau on his back ; four or five idlers were standing about waiting to see the traveller, whoever he was, mount and ride away, for in a lone country place the mounting or dismounting of a traveller is an event of some importance. Young Gronwy took his stand amongst these and waited for the coming event. Presently out came the

* MS. "his."

traveller, a tall, whimsical-looking man, with a sword by his side, a cocked hat on his head, and a pig-tail at his back. Mounting upon the block he put his one hand on the horse's neck, a foot in the stirrup, and was about to place himself in the saddle by swinging his other foot over the portmanteau, when his eye became fixed on something which protruded from a corner of it. The portmanteau, as before hinted, was a very ancient one, and it so happened that the seams at the corner had given way, so that part of some linen stood out plain and visibly. It was on the linen that the eye of the traveller was fixed. After regarding it for nearly a minute he turned round towards the bystanders, and, with a peculiar smile, said in Welsh verse :

" A pretty valise which cannot my two poor shirts keep in."

" Ha, ha ! " said the bystanders, " a Prydydd, a Prydydd ! "

" A pretty jacket which doth show to all my shirtless skin,"

said little Gronwy, coming forward, writhing his shoulders, shivering and pointing to some of the holes in his jacket, through which his naked skin appeared.

" A Bard, a Bard ! " said the stranger, staring at Gronwy. " Who in the name of heaven is that child ? " said he at last, addressing himself to the others.

" O, that's little dusky Gronwy," said a bystander.

" The child of Gronwy Eurych," added another.

" Whoever he is," said the stranger, " I must know more about him, for unless I am very much mistaken, he has the true *awen* and will turn out such a bard as Mona has not known since the days of Twysogion. Take my horse back into the stable," said he to the ostler.

Descending from the block he went up to Gronwy, and taking him by the hand, told him to show him where he lived. The child conducted him in the direction of his father's house. On their way [went] the two new friends. The stranger frequently addressed the child in verse, now in a couplet, now in a single line, now in a quartet, and the child returned couplet for couplet, stanza for stanza, and had never any difficulty in finding a line which rhymed with that of the stranger. At last they arrived at the house. The parents of Gronwy were both at home.

"This is a wonderful child of yours, friend," said the stranger, looking at the father.

"Wonderfully weak and small," said the father.

"He has something better than size and strength, he has the *awen*."

An English peasant would not have understood what was meant by the *awen* or the Muse either, but Gronwy Eurych understood the stranger perfectly well.

"Yes," said he, "he is very quick at shaping *penillion*."

"He is a good boy," put in the wife, "none of his age in Llanfair can read the Bible like him."

"But he is losing his time," said the stranger, "why is he not at school?"

"We kept him at school," said the wife, sighing, "till we could keep him there no longer. 'Tis time he learnt to read Welsh like a clergyman."

"He must learn to read Latin like a clergyman," said the stranger.

"And where is he to learn?" demanded Eurych.

"Where?" said the stranger, "why, at school!"

"There is no school hereabouts where Latin is taught," replied the father.

"But there is one at Blewmaris," said the

stranger, "and a better one still in Caernarvon. He must go there."

"And who shall send him?" said Eurych.

"I will," said the stranger.

"You! and who are you?"

"Who? I am Lewis Morris."

"O, Mr. Lewis Morris," said husband and wife, getting up and making their manners respectfully, for almost everybody in Anglesey, to say nothing of Merioneth and Cardiganshire, had heard of Lewis Morris.

Lewis Morris was as good as his words. He sent Gronwy Owen to school, where is not known, but probably at Carnarvon, and at school he supported him for several years. The boy was remarkably docile and fond of learning, and acquired the Latin and Greek languages with great facility. Welsh boys have less difficulty than English in acquiring Greek and Latin owing to the affinity of those two languages to their own, but Gronwy was remarkable even amongst Welsh boys for the facility with which he became a classical scholar. Amidst his classical studies, however, he did not neglect the *awen* but cultivated Welsh poetry with great assiduity. Those of his pieces which he deemed the best he was in the habit of communicating to Lewis Morris, with whom he corresponded. Lewis, who, as has been observed, was considered the best critic of his time in all that regarded Welsh song, perused and corrected his compositions, giving him the best advice in his power with regard to the management of his inspiration. Amongst other things he advised the lad never to be satisfied with what he wrote, provided he could make it better, and to avoid slovenliness, the grand fault of those who have an easy and flowing Muse. Gronwy bore this invaluable advice in mind and

became very fastidious in his style. He remained at school till he was about eighteen. Lewis then inquired of him which profession he should wish to follow.

"I should wish to be a clergyman," said the lad, "and to keep the sheep of the Lord." Lewis determined to send him to Oxford and eventually did so. Just before Gronwy departed for the University, he wrote eight *englynion* of almost matchless beauty, in which he expresses his ardent desire to become a member of Christ's ministry. They are the earliest of his regular compositions which have been preserved.

Gronwy Owen entered the great University of England in the year 1741. The writer has been unable to obtain any account of his university career, and even to learn the name of the college of which he became a member. There is a particular college in Oxford which has always been much frequented by Welsh students, and the chances are that Gronwy went thither. Had the writer had the necessary time at his disposal, he would, ere he penned this short and imperfect biography, have gone to Oxford and searched the registers of every college until he had found the name of Gronwy Owen. He is hopeful, however, that some other person with better opportunities than himself will undertake the task of seeking to discover the college in which Gronwy entered in the year 1741. And the truth with regard to this matter ought to be known. Whatever college received the little dusky Welsh lad ought to be proud of having had him as an inmate. He may or he may not have distinguished himself at its examinations, though there can be little doubt that he did; but is it not a glorious thing for any college to be able to say: "During a space of three years

my buttery fed the body, my library the brain of the last of the very illustrious ancient British bards " ?

He was ordained a deacon in the year 1745. He was now launched upon the world, and endeavoured to live honourably and independently by the exercise of his sacred profession. There is a letter of his extant addressed to Richard Morris, the brother of the immortal Lewis, from which may be gathered some interesting details of his life from this time to the year 1752, in which year it is dated. Shortly after his ordination he procured the curacy of his native parish in Anglesey from the chaplain of the Bishop of Bangor. Gronwy was delighted at obtaining the appointment. He had seen little of his native place since his early boyhood, and forthwith set off to take possession of his curacy. All his parishioners welcomed him with pleasure, amongst the rest his father; but the one who would have welcomed him most of all, his mother, whose favourite child he had ever been, was, alas! dead. Her absence was the only drawback upon the happiness of Gronwy. Many pleasant years did he promise himself of useful duty, of poetical application and study in his curacy, the emoluments of which were just twenty pounds a year, but he was not long permitted to indulge in his delicious visions. Ere three weeks had expired he received a letter from the chaplain, which gave him to understand that he must quit the curacy. He had, it seems, sent Gronwy to Llanfair without the knowledge of the Bishop, Doctor Hutton, who was absent from his diocese at the time; and had just received a communication from that dignitary that Mr. John Ellis of Caernarvon, a young clergyman of very great fortune, had long been soliciting the Bishop for some place within his diocese, wherever his Lordship might think fit; and that he, the

Bishop, intended to appoint him to Llanfair for a short time until he could find something better for him. Poor Gronwy was terribly mortified, and at first thought of making a complaint to the Bishop against the chaplain. On reflection, however, he considered that it would be more consistent with the character of a Christian minister to say nothing about the matter. Bidding his parishioners and father adieu he therefore set off for Denbigh, [and] resigned [the] curacy of Llanfair with its emoluments of twenty pounds a year, with which he would have considered himself passing rich, to the young clergyman of very great fortune, who so ardently longed to hold some place in the diocese of Doctor Hutton —who, the author believes, was *not* the author of the delightful and instructive book on arithmetic generally known by the name of "Hutton's Arithmetic," a book which stands on his shelf, on which he keeps his few books, between Drelincourt on Death and the poems of Gronwy Owen. As the reader may perhaps like to know something about the church where the child of immortality and the rich young clerical admirer of Doctor Hutton read prayers, he will here give a short description of it from his book called "Wild Wales," which contains amongst other things pilgrimages to the native places or spots of burial of the most illustrious Welsh bards, for example, Dafydd ab Gwilym, Lewis Glyn Cothi and the subject of the present memoir. "The church stands low down the descent, not far from the sea. A little brook, called in the language of the country a *frwd*, washes its yard-wall on the south. It is a small edifice with no spire, but to the south-west there is a little stone erection rising from the roof, in which hangs a bell—there is a small porch looking to the south. With respect to its interior I can say

nothing, the door being locked. It is probably like the outside, simple enough. It seems to be about two hundred and fifty years old, and to be kept in tolerable repair. Simple as the edifice was, I looked with great emotion upon it; and could I do else, when I reflected that the greatest British poet of the last century had worshipped God within it, with his poor father and mother, when a boy ? " *

Gronwy arrived at Denbigh with a staff in his hand and a wallet on his back. Here for a little time it is believed that he served as usher to a school. Shortly, however, hearing of a vacant curacy in the neighbourhood of Oswestry in Shropshire, he went in quest of it and obtained it. He never saw Mona afterwards and only once again visited Wales, namely, when he went to Llan Elwy in order to obtain priest's orders. After some time he became curate of Oswestry. One day as he sat in a little ground-parlour in that place, putting the last corrections to a beautiful poem, the door opened and in came his brother, weary with travel, dusty, and wet with perspiration.

" Mercy upon us, Owen," said Gronwy, " what is the matter ? "

" There is nothing particular the matter, brother," said Owen.

" How is my father ? "

" He is as well as usual."

" And my sister Jane ? "

" She's at service."

" And why came you hither ? "

" Why, I came to see whether you could not do something for me."

" Do something for you ? "

* A blank is left in MS. for the description, which has been added from " Wild Wales."—[Ed.]

"Yes! amongst all your grand acquaintances."

"My grand acquaintances! I have no grand acquaintances, and as for doing anything, I can scarcely—however, *croesaw!* I can offer you *bara a chaws* * and *cwrw* of Croes Oswallt!"

As they were discussing their bread-and-cheese and Oswestry ale, and the writer begs leave to state that the Oswestry ale is the best in Shropshire, word was brought that the clerk of the church had just expired in a fit. Gronwy was very grieved at the intelligence, more especially as the clerk had left a large family. His brother, however, after a long fit of musing, exclaimed: "If I could but obtain the berth, I should have nothing more to wish for."

"What, the place of the clerk?"

"Yes."

"But are you fitted for it?"

"I should hope so. I can read Sassenach † almost as well as yourself. Surely you can obtain the place for me amongst all your grand acquaintances."

Gronwy [asked] his brother to read to him a chapter out of the Bible and found in effect that he could read English remarkably well. The next day he set to work to obtain the place for his brother and obtained it without much difficulty. So Gronwy was curate of the ancient church of Oswestry, a church in which Owen Glendower more than once said his prayers whilst awaiting with his twelve thousand mountaineers—that awaiting was his grand mistake—the event of the battle of Shrewsbury.

People may sneer at the state of the Church of England during the former part of the last century, and there can be no doubt that there was much that was lax and irregular in the conduct of its

* MS. "y caws." Cf. p. 237, note.—[Ed.]

† Borrow should have written "Saesneg."—[Ed.]

ministers in general, and of coarseness and viciousness in that of its laity; but the writer has no hesitation in saying that upon the whole both the clergy and laity exhibited much more of the Christian spirit than they do at present. There was less of puppyism amongst the clergy, less of the crazy rage for gentility amongst the lay members of the Church. Here we have an instance of a priest of the good old Church welcoming his brother, hot and dusty from his journey from the mountains of Wales, and obtaining him the appointment of clerk, anything but a dignified employment, in the church in which he himself was in the habit of preaching on a Sunday; and here we have an instance of an old Church of England congregation being by no means scandalised at such an arrangement. The curate was not ashamed of his poor brother; the congregation did not turn up their noses at their poor curate, because his yet poorer brother occupied the clerk's desk. O, the thoughts and feelings of people have wonderfully altered during the last hundred years, and hardly for the better. Let any one imagine the feelings of a curate of the present day, the son of some shoemaker or tinman, who has been educated at Oxford, if the door of his lodging in some provincial town should open and his poor brother, dusty and reeking from the roads, should come in and ask him to obtain for him the vacant clerkship of his church, by means of his grand acquaintances. Imagine the feelings of the curate at such an apparition and proposition, more especially if he were of the platitude party, which he probably would be, being the son of a shoemaker or tinman and educated at Oxford. Would his feelings have been like those of Gronwy Owen, or perhaps of many another curate of the old time? The writer rather thinks not. But above all, conceive the

feelings of a Church of England congregation of the present day on learning that their new clerk was no other than the brother of their curate. Would they be like those of the old Oswestry laity ? The writer rather thinks not. How many tea-parties would the poor wretch with the white neckcloth be asked out to after such a discovery ? Ah ! the old Church was the best Church of the two. There was boxing, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting occasionally on the green in the days of the old Church, and there was the greasy cassock occasionally standing by. But in those days puppyism and nonsense had not taken entire possession of clergy and laity. The curate of Oswestry is not ashamed to have a clerk for his brother ; the congregation of Oswestry are not ashamed of their curate, because he is brother to their clerk.

CHAPTER XXIII

Gronwy was curate at Oswestry for something more than two years, and there he married a young person of a respectable family with the full consent and approbation of her parents, who, however, gave her no dowry and never afterwards assisted the curate and his wife in any manner whatever. His brother Owen the clerk also married somebody at Oswestry, but whether of a respectable family the writer is unable to say. From Oswestry Gronwy went in June, 1748, to Donnington, a village in Shropshire, to undertake a curacy and school under one Douglas, a Scotchman, but his brother the clerk, being quite satisfied with his situation, continued at Oswestry till the day of his death. He left behind him a male child, and the grandson of that male child, and consequently the great-grand-nephew of Gronwy, was in the year 1854 moving about the old church of Oswestry.

On the . . .* day of October in the year 1854 the writer walked from Llangollen to Oswestry, a distance of thirteen miles, being very anxious to see a place in which Gronwy had resided for several years and the church in which he had officiated. The writer was accompanied by John Jones, a weaver of Llangollen, a person well acquainted with his own language but ignorant of English. The day was wet and gloomy. They proceeded to the church, in the yard of which they found a man digging in a grave.

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

On the writer's inquiring whether he and his companion could see the church, he said they could and that he would show it to them, for that he had the key in his pocket being sexton. He then scrambled out of the hole. He might be about forty-five, was somewhat about the middle stature, of a ruddy complexion, bareheaded, and was much soiled with mud and mould. Opening the church-door, he showed the writer and his companion about the church. The writer and his companion began to talk in Welsh. The writer asked his companion how he felt.

"Much as usual," said John Jones.

"I feel unusually agitated," said the writer. "The idea that I am treading the aisles which once echoed to Gronwy Owen's voice agitates me exceedingly. He had the *awen*, O John."

"Yes," said John Jones, "he had certainly the *awen;* I never read his pieces, they being written in the difficult measures with *cynghanedd*, which compels the poets who use it to curtail words, thus rendering their compositions hard to be understood, but I have no doubt that Gronwy Owen had the *awen*. I have heard people wiser than myself say that he had."

On the mention of the name of Gronwy Owen the writer observed that the sexton became attentive.

"I think I heard you speak of Gronwy Owen, sir," said he presently to the writer.

"I was speaking of him, certainly," said the writer; "did you ever hear of him?"

"Hear of him, sir?" said the sexton. "Yes, I am of his blood, being lineally descended from his brother, who was clerk of this church whilst he was curate."

"And that was more than a hundred years ago," said the writer.

"I believe it was," said the sexton.

"Dear me," said the writer, "I would not have

missed seeing you for a great deal. You are the greatest curiosity in Oswestry."

"Do you think so, sir?" said the poor man modestly.

"Yes! I do! Don't the people of Oswestry make a great deal of you?"

The sexton smiled and looked at his hands covered with mould and mire.

"I wouldn't turn my head to look at a prince, my friend, but I would have come a hundred miles to shake you by the hand. Here's my hand, if you will do me the honour to shake it. Come, never mind the mud and clay. I shall be only too proud to take a little of it off you."

Thereupon the sexton and writer shook hands and —but what more passed between them in the course of discourse will be found related in the writer's book entitled "Wild Wales."

Gronwy arrived in Donnington in the month of June, 1748, and shortly after his taking up his abode there, his wife bore him a son, whom he called Robert. It was at this place that he completed his most celebrated poem, namely, "Cywydd y Farn Fawr," or "The Song of the Great Judgment." It is a poem on the Last Day and is by far the best piece ever written on that awful subject. It is said that he began it whilst at college and that he was occupied upon it off and on for the space of seven years. It is not a long piece, as it does not amount in all [to] two hundred lines, but every line seems to contain a history. After about two years his wife bore him another son, whom he named after himself, Gronwy. In his letter above alluded to, to Richard Morris, he laments that there was every probability that his children would be brought up Saxons. His wife, though she understood something of Welsh, could

not converse in it, and as for himself, he said that he had never been able to teach anybody Welsh, though he had occasionally tried. But a more serious subject for lamentation than the probability of his children being brought up mere English was continually before him, namely, the distress of his family and himself. They were half-starved. He had to keep school at Donnington and to preach and read at Uppington, a place in the neighbourhood, for six-and-twenty pounds a year. Now on six-and-twenty pounds a year he might have contrived in Anglesey to support his family and himself with some small degree of comfort, but how was he to do so at Donnington, where house-rent and the necessaries of life were about twice as dear as in Anglesey ? He could do no such thing ; so himself and [his] family were half-starved. At any rate Gronwy was, who doubtless occasionally fasted rather than see his dear ones suffer. Did not his patron or rector or whatever you please to call him assist him ? Occasionally ask him to dinner or slip a yellow guinea into his hand ? Neither, neither. His patron sacked the emoluments connected with the benefice, some three or four hundred a year, paid Gronwy six-and-twenty pounds to perform all the duties of the sacerdotal office and school, and lived in London, place-hunting and like a genuine Scotchman playing the sycophant to the great, never thinking of his curate, unless when a sudden fear came over him that he should be making a farthing too much by him. " Hard enough and severe he is towards me," says Gronwy in his letter to Richard Morris. " I hold a little land under him, which belongs to the school, and although the rent was too high before, he endeavoured to raise it this year for fear the wretched curate should get anything in his service or should obtain from him too good

a bargain. His steward, however, who knew what the land was worth, had not the heart to raise the rent one farthing, and it is a question whether any one else would give as much." O, the unparalleled extensiveness of Scotch kindness and charity!

Of this Douglas, of this Scot, it will be well to say something in particular. He had entered England, like many other Scotchmen, determined to make a fortune. The first step which he took towards making one was to conform to and become a minister of the Church of England. By holding the candle and paying the most fulsome adulation to the great he attracted the notice of several. Like most Scotchmen he had a little, and only a little, learning, which he displayed to the best advantage. It is probable, however, that he would never have been much heard of in the world but for the following circumstance. One Lauder had written a pamphlet full of falsehood and calumny against Milton. He had picked up an obsolete Latin translation of certain portions of "Paradise Lost," and in his pamphlet, by quoting freely from the translated portions, which he gave out as original composition, endeavoured to make the world believe that Milton was an unprincipled plagiarist. The pamphlet caused a sensation, and the admirers of Milton were much mortified. Douglas, however, who knew Lauder, his own countryman, and the whole circumstances of the transaction, wrote a book in which he vindicated Milton and exposed Lauder. The admirers of Milton, and they comprised all the learned and dignified, were delighted. Something must be done for Douglas; and he was presented with Donnington. Always running after the great, he attracted the notice of the Earl of Bath, who made him tutor to his sons. To be the tutor to the sons of a powerful

nobleman was in those days the stepping-stone to a bishopric. At the very time Douglas was starving Gronwy Owen, who was drudging for him at Donnington and Uppington, he was tutor in town to the sons of the Earl of Bath. Douglas had made a lucky hit; the tide of his fortune was flowing and he took it at the head. He was not fool enough to depend for advancement solely on his vindication of Milton. He did not commit the gross mistake of sitting down after performing a service to literature and the world, and expecting that something would be done for him. No, no, trust the Scotchman! He held the candle to the great, adulating them, taking care, however, never to let them forget that he was the vindicator of Milton, and he met the reward which merit meets when accompanied with sycophancy. Benefice after benefice was bestowed upon him, on the proceeds of which he grew rich in London, where he resided, toadying to the great and saying an occasional good word for himself; whilst the wretched curates who performed for him his clerical duties were dying of inanition in the country. Ever pursuing the career of sycophancy and quiet self-laudation, he was appointed in the year 1788 to the see of Carlisle and in 1799 to that of Salisbury, in the enjoyment of which he died. A very fair career for a Scotchman! "He vindicated Milton," was said in his funeral sermon. His proper epitaph seems to be the following: "Here lies the divine who vindicated the English Milton and starved the Welsh one."

Gronwy, though much occupied with keeping school and attending to the spiritual wants of the parish confided to him, yet found time for other things. He cultivated the Muse, wrote letters to his friends, and kept up his acquaintance with the learned languages. Every month he wrote some fresh piece,

which he despatched to Lewis Morris, who took good care to make the *literati* of Wales acquainted with it. Amongst those with whom he corresponded was the Rev. Ellis, minister of Holyhead, a passionate admirer of his genius and who eventually printed some of his poems at his own expense, amongst others "The Song of Judgment." He was very fond of Hebrew and Chaldee and gave up many a nocturnal hour to their pursuit. He wished to find some acquaintance with Arabic but knew not where to get a grammar. He had heard that books of all kinds could be picked up on the stalls of London very cheap, and perhaps an Arabic grammar might be met there. "If you should see such a book by chance (for I would not put you in the least trouble in the world about it), and secure it for me," says he in his letter to Richard Morris, who resided in London, "I would remit the money immediately and ever gratefully acknowledge the favour. I could remit the money by the Salop wagon." "Some time ago," says he in another place, "I was wishing I had a correspondent in London besides my patron, for he would do me no good." The idea of Douglas the Scot, the vindicator of Milton and toad-eater to the aristocracy, looking amongst the stalls of London for an Arabic grammar for his poor curate in the country! The bard knew his patron too well to expect such a thing.

Poor Gronwy would gladly have quitted Donnington long before he did quit it. He had a hankering after Wales, and frequently wrote to Lewis Morris to endeavour to procure him a curacy in some part of the Principality. Lewis Morris tried hard enough but in vain. Gronwy was destined never to see Wales again. At length he escaped from Donnington and starvation. Hearing of a curacy near Walton in Lancashire, he applied for it and obtained it.

CHAPTER XXIV

To Walton he set out in the latter part of April, 1753. He left his wife and family behind to follow by some kind of conveyance when he should have procured for them an habitation. There is every probability that he himself walked from Donnington in Shropshire to Walton, which is in the neighbourhood of Liverpool. Of his reception at the place, and of the clergyman, he has given a graphic account in a letter which he wrote the day after his arrival to William Morris of Holyhead. He arrived, he says, at his place of destination, one Sunday morning just before service. The parson received him with open arms, but though he was dreadfully tired, made him read the morning service and preach, and in the afternoon read the service, but preached the sermon himself. Of his patron the clergyman he says that his man and maid, who comprised his entire household, gave him a vile character for stinginess and ill-temper; but that he himself never met with a person of more cheerful and agreeable discourse nor a better and more fluent preacher. It is true his appearance was portentous. He had the face of a lion or something yet more frightful, so rugged that mice might have made their nests in its folds. He was slovenly in his dress, and was continually chewing the Indian weed, so that two red and yellow rivulets were always flowing from the corners of his mouth. In size he more resembled some monstrous creature of Africa than an English clergyman, so that when the two walked to church in their black gowns, poor Gronwy

looked, behind him, like a little boat in the wake of a man-of-war. The people of the neighbourhood appeared sullen, loutish, and unmannerly. Everything, however, was cheap enough. "I've found people," says Gronwy in the letter alluded to, "to board me at the rate of eight pounds a year, till I find a place for my family. I could not live cheaper in native Mona." We should think not! Eight pounds a year is less than three shillings a week. What could his hosts have set before him? Did they allow him the whole, the half, or the third of a bed? He states that his salary was to be thirty-five pounds a year and that there was a free school, the mastership of which was generally given to the curate, with a salary of thirteen pounds a year, with a house in the churchyard to live in; so that, considering the cheapness of the neighbourhood, he looked forward to being tolerably comfortable when his wife and family were about him.

His family at last arrived and he settled down. Whether he obtained the mastership of the school, the salary of thirteen pounds a year and the house in the churchyard we are unable to say, but the probability is that he did. In Walton his wife bore him a daughter whom he christened Ellen, but who only lived a year and five months. She was buried in the churchyard of Walton. She appears to have been a dear little angel; the poor bard loved her passionately and wrote a beautiful little elegy upon her death, which contains the following lines pointing out the place where she was buried:

> "Yn iach, fy Merch lwysfach lon, . . . f'Angyles,
> Gorphwys ym Mynwes Monwent Walton."

Though Gronwy was not in so destitute a situation in the neighbourhood in which he now was, as he had

been at Donnington, he had much to vex and annoy him and soon wished himself in Wales almost as heartily as he had done in the other place; and one can little wonder that he did so. He had no society. There was no kindred soul with whom he could communicate in the neighbourhood, where everybody looked down upon him from the circumstance of his being a Welshman, the very boors regarding him as a being far below themselves, trudging past him and returning no answer to his "Good day," when he met them in their dirty roads. Of his rector, the man for whom he kept school and read prayers and preached, he saw very little, his principal opportunity for seeing and hearing him being when that immense dignitary preached a first-rate sermon in the afternoon. His wife, though a good kind of creature, seems to have been without much mind or conversation. No wonder the poor curate wished to be in Wales, where he would have found some people to feel with him and appreciate him. "How can I sing in this strange land, amidst these surly Saxons?" says he in a song to Huw Huwes, a poet of Anglesey, generally called the Red Bard. "I am like [the] captive Israelites, who were required to sing beside the streams of Babylon." * Nevertheless, as the Babylon * song is one of the best of the efforts of the Hebrew Muse, so are the Walton songs of Gronwy Owen amongst the very best of his compositions. The song in answer to the request of the Red Bard, though complaining, is beautifully tender; and the "Cywydd Y Maen Gwerthfawr," or the "Ode on the Precious Stone," by which is meant happiness, contained lines of such extraordinary power that Lewis Morris on receiving it fell into a fit of rapture, and swore that the author was not only an honour to the Ancient

* MS. reads "Babel."

Britons but to the human race in general. So that it perhaps was good for the world that Gronwy was compelled to sojourn amidst the bullock-like clowns of Walton. Let us hope that he was not so very, very miserable after all! A person who wrote such glorious poetry as he did there must have had his enviable moments. He must have felt that he was somebody, more especially as letters franked by Vaughan of Cors y Gedol, Bulkley of Mona, and other distinguished Welsh members of Parliament, were every now and then arriving from his admirers in Wales at his poor hovel in the churchyard (we will suppose he obtained it), breathing homage to his genius, telling him that he was the rival of Taliesin and more than equal to the two Myrddins.

It is, however, a mortifying thing to have nobody to speak to and to be snubbed by bullocks in Lancashire, where you are, though worshipped in Wales, where you are not. Gronwy would no doubt have given some of his Welsh fame to have been thought a little more of in Lancashire, to have been asked to dinner or supper by the squire of Walton. Gronwy was a social being and was fond of a party now and then; to prove that he was fond of a party, he once gave one at Walton. It was on the following occasion. He heard that another Welsh curate had come into the neighbourhood, so in order to show his countryman a little decent hospitality he went over to him and asked him to supper, and asked his patron and two or three other clergymen to come and meet him. All agreed to come, and his patron [could not ?] but sent him a bottle of rum in order to help him a little in giving the entertainment. And here the writer can't help saying that there must have been something in that man of twenty stone, or he would not have sent that bottle of rum. His name

deserves to be handed down to posterity for having done so, and the writer only laments that he does not know his name or he certainly would have inserted it in this bardic book. It is some time before Douglas the Scot would have sent his curate a bottle of rum to make merry with his friends. So the company came and made merry. And now, as the party has been mentioned, something curious must be mentioned which occurred at it. Here the English guests had the good taste to begin to speak against the Welsh language, of which they knew nothing, to say that it was a jargon and ought to be extirpated. Gronwy, naturally, though with delicacy, took the part of his country's language, but everybody was against him. The very Welsh curate whom he had invited had the meanness to be against him, [and] in order to curry favour with the grand English ecclesiastics said the Welsh language was a jargon, adding with a self-satisfied simper that it contained in it no literature, nothing worth reading. "The English triumphed much," said Gronwy Owen in a letter in which he describes this scene, "in having their opinion corroborated by a Welshman, but I laughed, as I always do when I hear a thing very absurd."

And well he might laugh at what the young urchin, for he was a very young man, said with the self-satisfied simper. It was certainly an absurd thing to say the Welsh language contained no literature; but how was the natural absurdity of the thing heightened by its being uttered in the presence of a man who had lately been composing pieces deserving immortality, in the room in which the party was held, and who was not only the greatest Welsh poet, but by far the greatest British poet of the eighteenth century!

The year 1752 opened in rather a melancholy manner for Gronwy at Walton. On the first day of

the year, which was his birthday, he was seized with an acute fit of illness, which, however, speedily passed away, but left him in a state of considerable debility. This event he commemorated in a sweet and melancholy song. Before the middle of this year, which had commenced so inauspiciously, he had quitted Walton and betaken himself with his family to London. He had been induced to take this step by the hope of obtaining the chaplaincy of a Welsh church, which some of his friends in London had informed him was about to be established in the metropolis. Gronwy, however, had left a certainty for an uncertainty. The project of establishing a Welsh church in London, which had indeed been entertained, was soon dropped; and now behold the poor curate in London with his wife and two children, with no employment and with scarcely any money. They lived in a garret and were speedily in a state of great destitution. In his lofty retreat he wrote two poems connected with the circumstances in which he then found himself. The first is called "Arwyrain y Nennawr," or "The Garret Poem," in which he says that he is happy in his cell, though he has no dinner, and after describing the madness and folly of the crowd beneath, says that it is better to be above with the Muse than below with harlots. The other, which he wrote almost immediately after the "Garret Poem," is in Latin, addressed to Apollo and the Nine. It is full of fun and humour, showing evidently that his late disappointment had not much affected his spirits. In this piece, notwithstanding his late compliment to the Muse, he abuses the god of song heartily and says that his damsels are not a bit better than they should be. As it is written in a language intelligible to everybody, it is but right to insert it:

"Ad Apollinem et Musas."

"O Smintheu! Pater Esuritionum,
Nugas tolle tuas Ineptiasque,
Vosque ite, O, procul hinc novem sorores!
Vobis non opus est mihi, Camenæ,
Indignatio quem facit Poetam.
Longum Pierides malæ, valete
Euterpe meretrix, Thalia mœcha
Scortillum Polyhymnia invenustum,
Clio prostibulum, lutum, Lupanar,
Et quas prætereo malæ puellæ
Per quas non nisi mortuis Poetis
Sero Fama venit, Famesque vivis!
Ah! vidi, et pudet heu! sed ipse vidi
Vestro de grege, pessimæ, Poetam
Jucundum, facilem, probum, disertum,
Cordatum, verecundum et eruditum,
Et cultum satis et sat elegantem,
Et qui cederet unico Catullo,
Docto par tamen ipse Martiali,
Quem juxta Veneresque Gratiæque
Certabant sibi vendicare cunctæ,
Qui si fortia bella personaret
Magnum vivere crederes Homerum,
Seu Mopsi teneros referret ignes
Haud quidquam cecinit vel ipse Sappho,
Pulchro, Lesbia, mollius Phaoni:
Hunc vidi miserum, indignum, dolentem
Squallenti facie, horridaque barba
Detritis quoque sordidum lacernis,
Et nudis pedibus, genuque nudo,
Hybernis Aquilonibus rigentem,
Ævi reliquias malas trahentem
Ægrè, nec saturum offulis caninis.
O quanto melius beatiusque
Et Cerdonibus est et Architectis
Saltatoribus atque Pantomimis
Artes quique colunt pecuniosas!
Quid rodis, male Livor, immerentes?
Et quid Zoilus invidat Poetis?
At me Gronovium, tuum Poetam,
Nugacissime Phœbe, perdidisti,
Si posthac numeris ineptiisque
Nostri ludere pruriant libelli

Claudi nec metuant Dei furorem,
Si nec tardipedi Deo dabuntur
Sit durus mihi Plutus et Minerva.
At vos interea, novem Sorores
Longum, Pierides malæ, valete
Et Smintheu, Pater Esuritionum." *

After all, there was no reason why Gronwy should absolutely be broken-hearted during his stay in London. He certainly was in great poverty, but there was much to cheer him. Many of the Welsh of the metropolis came to visit the bard of Mona in his room, which, he says, was thrice six yards above ground; and no doubt some of them afforded him assistance. The Cymrodorion Society held a solemn meeting in his honour to which they invited him. He went and recited a wonderful song in their praise composed in the four-and-twenty measures. Whilst reciting it he was frequently interrupted by the acclamations of his enraptured countrymen, and when he had concluded he was presented with a small silver harp.

After singing and starving in London for about two months he was fortunate enough to obtain the curacy of Northolt, a village about twelve miles distant from London. How he obtained it the writer is not able to say. To Northolt he repaired with his family, and was soon tolerably comfortable. From a letter written by him to his friend William Morris we learn the following particulars. His rector, Dr. Nicholls, Master of the Temple, allowed him fifty pounds a year. The duties of the parish, which was a small one, were not arduous. He had only to preach once on a Sunday and to read the service on certain feast-days, about twelve in the year. Tolerably comfortable, the poor bard deter-

* Borrow had omitted to quote these lines which have been supplied from Gronwy Owen's works.—[Ed.]

mined to devote himself assiduously to his favourite pursuit. "I shall have plenty of time," says he in a letter to William Morris, from which the particulars which we have mentioned above are gathered, "to correspond with my friends and to poetise. I have a great many pieces, begun long ago, which I shall send to them, but not till I have made them perfect."

What pieces he finished in Northolt we know not, and we are unable to say what pieces he composed there, with the exception of one. Gronwy had a friend in London of about his own age whom he had known long and whom he dearly loved. This was William Parry, Deputy-Comptroller of the Mint. To this friend he sent from Northolt a poetical invitation which has long made that little suburban village something like a classic spot to the Welsh scholar :

"Parry, of all my friends the best,
Thou who thy Maker cherishest,
Thou who regard'st me so sincere,
And who to me art no less dear ;
Kind friend, in London since thou art,
To love thee's not my wisest part ;
This separation's hard to bear :
To love thee not far better were.

"But wilt thou not from London town
Journey some day to Northolt down,
Song to obtain, O sweet reward,
And walk the garden of the Bard ?—
But thy employ, the year throughout,
Is wandering the White Tower about,
Moulding and stamping coin with care,
The farthing small and shilling fair.
Let for a month thy Mint lie still,
Covetous be not, little Will ;
Fly from the birth-place of the smoke,
Nor in that wicked city choke ;
O come, though money's charms be strong,
And if thou come I'll give thee song,

A draught of water, hap what may,
Pure air to make thy spirits gay,
And welcome from an honest heart
That's free from every guileful art.
I'll promise—fain thy face I'd see—
Yet something more, sweet friend, to thee ;
The poet's cwrw * thou shalt prove,
In talk with him the garden rove,
Where in each leaf thou shalt behold
The Almighty's wonders manifold ;
And every flower, in verity,
Shall unto thee show visibly,
In every fibre of its frame,
His deep design who made the same.
A thousand flowers stand here around,
With glorious brightness some are crown'd :
How beauteous art thou, lily fair !
With thee no silver can compare :
I'll not forget thy dress outshone
The pomp of regal Solomon.
I write the friend I love so well
No sounding verse his heart to swell :
The fragile flowerets of the plain
Can rival human triumphs vain.
I liken to a floweret's fate
The fleeting joys of mortal state ;
The flower so glorious seen to-day
To-morrow dying fades away ;
An end has soon the flowery clan,
And soon arrives the end of man ;
The fairest floweret ever known
Would fade when cheerful summer's flown.
Then hither haste, ere turns the wheel !
Old age doth on these flowers steal ;
Though pass'd two-thirds of Autumn-time,
Of summer temperature's the clime ;
The garden shows no sickliness,
The weather old age vanquishes,
The leaves are greenly glorious still—
But friend ! grow old they must and will.

" The rose, at edge of winter now,
Doth fade with all its summer glow ;

* Ale.

Old are become the roses all,
Decline to age we also shall.
And with this prayer I'll end my lay :
Amen with me, O Parry, say ;
To us be rest from all annoy,
And a robust old age of joy ;
May we, ere pangs of death we know,
Back to our native Mona go ;
May pleasant days us there await,
United and inseparate !
And the dread hour, when God shall please
To bid our mutual journey cease,
May Christ, who reigns in heaven above,
Receive us to his breast of love ! " *

* These lines, omitted in Borrow's MS., have been inserted from "Targum."—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XXV

At Northolt Gronwy continued for about two years; he then quitted it and repaired to London. Whether he resigned the curacy, or whether it was taken from him, there are no data which will enable us to state with any certainty. The chances, however, are that he received notice to quit it from his principal, in order to make way for some other person. It is hardly to be supposed that he would have resigned willingly the means of supporting his family and himself. He was again in London and his prospects were gloomy enough. No better plan occurred to him at this period than to publish his poems by subscription. He hoped after defraying the expenses of their publication a sum would remain, which for some time would keep the wolf from the door. This plan he communicated to his friends, and a subscription was set afloat, but alas! subscribers were not as plentiful as blackberries, which were then in season. A certain number of names were soon put down, a sufficient number, perhaps, to have warranted the bard to have committed his works to the press, but then the subscription flagged, flagged terribly, not more than two or three fresh names appearing on the list during the course of several weeks. About this period Lewis Morris, who had done his best to promote the subscription, heard that a head master was wanted at some college which was about to be established at some place in * Virginia. He thought

* MS. "at."

of Gronwy and forthwith wrote to him, enquiring whether he was willing to go to Virginia to keep school there for a handsome salary.

"I am quite willing to go," wrote poor Gronwy in reply, "for what [have] I to look forward to but starvation, provided I remain here?"

The noble Lewis forthwith set about endeavouring to procure the appointment for his friend. He spared no effort and [his] recommendation was successful.

"Behold Gronwy bard," says Lewis in a letter written by him to David Jones of Trefriw in Caernarvonshire, "going to Virginia to sing to the Indians and to eat tobacco and to have about three hundred pounds a year for his pains, under pretence of being master of some great school. So he has no need of subscribers."

But, poor fellow, he had need of subscribers. It would have been well for Gronwy if some five hundred subscribers could at this time have been obtained. He might then have printed his works and have had something like a hundred and fifty pounds for an outfit, without which he could scarcely go with his family to America. An outfit he eventually had, not from funds of his own, which did not exist, but from the generosity of four individuals, whose names ought to be transmitted to posterity. These individuals were Lewis Morris, his brother Richard Morris, Parry of the Mint, and one Parson Humphreys, an enthusiastic admirer of Gronwy, who was related to the Humphreys of Llwyn, an ancient family in the neighbourhood of Llan Rhyadr.

So Gronwy Owen and his family set sail to the new world across the great western waste of waters. How did they fare? How did they indeed! For a great many years his countrymen at home knew no more of what had become of the emigrant than

the anxious friends and relations of Madog knew of the fate of the adventurous Welsh prince, after he had departed in the same direction with his followers in search of a peaceful home. The fate of Madog and his men has continued a mystery to the present day. The fate of Gronwy and his family has not exactly remained a mystery, yet scanty in amount and unsatisfactory in quality is the intelligence with respect to what befell them in America which up to the present day has found its way to Britain.

Many of the friends and admirers of the poet had departed to their long home, wondering what had become of little dusky Gronwy. Amongst these were two of the Morrises, one of them the noble Lewis, who almost on his death-bed declared that Gronwy Owen was one of the greatest poets that the world had ever produced, and that it was an eternal disgrace to Britain that such a man had been obliged to quit his country and his friends to seek for bread in a foreign and distant land. At last, towards the close of the year 1767, Richard Morris of London, the brother of Lewis [and] a kind friend of Gronwy, whom more than once we have had cause to mention in our memoir, [received a letter] from the long-lost but not forgotten poet.

It was written in dear Welsh, and to the astonishment of Richard contained a dirge in the same language, composed in the four-and-twenty measures, on his glorious and immortal brother. The letter, which was from a place called Brunswick, in America, and was dated the twenty-third of July of the above-mentioned [year], after condoling with Richard on the death of his brothers, states that the writer would probably never have heard the news but for the following circumstance. Richard had written to a person called William Parry, who resided at Middlesea,

a place above a hundred and forty miles from where Gronwy was residing. This Parry had written a letter after some time to Gronwy, who had returned an answer, but did not know whether Parry had received it, as he had not subsequently heard from him; so that he was apprehensive that some dirty scoundrel had destroyed the letter before giving it to Parry. What immediately follows is literally translated from the letter; the particulars which it contains with respect to the country in which the Welsh bard was then residing are too remarkable to be in any way modified.

"There is no post here," he says, "going through the country as yonder at home. All we can do is to confide the letter to the first person we can find who is going to the place to which we want to send it; and sometimes a letter will be nine months or a year in travelling a distance of thirty miles, and often enough will never reach its destination. An offspring of thieves from every country are the inhabitants of this tangled wilderness, or at least the greater part of them; and an infernal itching have they on their fingers to be meddling with other people's business, and never are they happy unless they know every wink of the eye which passes between the born Englishman and his countrymen at home. O, the rage that they have for knowing the affairs of the men of Britain and whether they give a good word or not to their countrymen of this region and its inhabitants. It will be necessary for me to go sixty miles or more to give this letter to some captain on shipboard, otherwise it would never reach you, and I wish it may do so as it is. I have written to you a multitude of letters during a space of eight years and know not whether you have got one of them."

Here was an explanation with a vengeance, at last, why Gronwy had for so many years never been heard of by his anxious friends and admirers. The Yankees had tampered with his letters. Not one of the multitude which he confided into their hands to be delivered by them to the ship-captain had ever been presented. They had been opened, pored over, and then torn up. But poor Gronwy had his revenge! Reader, figure to yourself a Yankee chuckling over the thought of learning what the Britisher should say to his friends at home, taking the letter as soon as he had turned round the corner of the wood, tearing it open; and then figure to yourself the expression on the face of the *corgi*, the dirty dog, on reading a passage like this: "With the devil of an itch on their fingers to be meddling with other people's business." Yes, figure to yourself the sweet expression on the face of the *corgi*. O, what a thing to sell one's soul to the devil without getting one's reward! On tearing open a letter put into his hands by a confiding man in the wilderness for his anxious friends, to find it written in *Sweet Welsh!* O reader, imagine all this and then, if you can, refrain from a laugh as loud as that of Robin Goodfellow on a certain occasion:

> "To aid the sport I sneeze and snort
> And out the candles I do blow,
> The maids to kiss—they shriek 'Who's this?'
> I answer nought but 'Ho! ho! ho!'"

Then Gronwy proceeds to say that about forty miles from where he lived there was one Sion ap Huw, or John Pugh, a native of Merioneth, residing as parson of a parish, who had told him amongst other things that some of his works had been published; and expresses a great wish to see them in print and asks would it be possible to obtain a sight of them on

his side of the sea. He then says that in his present letter he could give him little or no account of what had happened to him, but that if he would only write to him, he in a future letter would tell him all he could desire. He then wishes him to inform him who of his acquaintance are living and where they reside, lest he should write to people in their graves. "Is your nephew, John Owen, living?" he asks, and here it will be as well to say that this John Owen was a young man of high talent and a delightful poet. "Is Parry of the Mint living? Is Parson Humphreys? Is Tom Williams the druggist of Lon y bais living, and if so, does he live there still? Is Huwcyn Williams, parson of Aberfraw alive? Is your father alive? Is my sister Jane living at Mountain Bodafon? I have heard that my brother Owen is dead at Oswestry." He then concludes in terms to the following effect: "I am, thanks be to God, in excellent health, and the country agrees with me exceedingly well. Not one of my English family is alive, with the exception of my son Robert. I am married to my third wife, and I have three children which were born here. But may God and his saints save us from the inhabitants of this country, with the exception of such as are English, and many of them are good for very little. Greet my friend Parry of the Mint, the parson of the White Tower (Twr Gwyn), John Owen, dear fellow, aye, and Andrew Jones and every human face of my acquaintance. God keep you all!—Gronwy Owen."

Such was the letter of Gronwy from Brunswick in America. Though not very long, it is probably one of the most interesting letters ever written from an exile to his friends at home. That part in which he speaks of his old acquaintances, not forgetting Tom Williams the druggist of Lon y bais, is highly affecting.

But oh! the best part is certainly that in which he speaks of the rage of the Yankees for becoming acquainted with other people's business, to gratify which they would stop at no act, however dirty and scoundrelly. Surely, that envious, malignant crew were never so shown up before or since!

The above is the only known letter extant from Gronwy after leaving Britain, and it contains all the authentic information which exists concerning his life in the New World. What a pity that the multitude of valuable letters which he wrote should have perished in the scoundrelly manner which he describes! At the time in which he writes the letter we are not aware what situation he was occupying or what were his hopes or prospects. He says that he had lost all his English family with the exception of his son Robert, that he was married to his third wife, and that he had children born in the country. There is, however, reason to suppose that the children were not his own, but were those of his second wife by a former husband. In a letter written by Richard Morris to Evan Evans the poet, there is the following passage: "I find by a gentleman from Virginia that poor Gronwy is still unfortunate: his second wife is also dead and left him a heap of children to maintain, I think five or six, and her brother, the president of the college, insists on his maintaining them out of his own income. Enough this to drive the Muse from his brain for all eternity." Now had the children been his own, as the editor of his works observes in [the] brief little memoir of the poet prefixed to his works, there would have been nothing unreasonable in her brother, the president of the college, insisting on his maintaining them out of his salary. And here we cannot help observing that after all it would appear that Gronwy was not the

president of the college, but the second and perhaps working master. His final residence is believed to have been Williamsburgh, of which place he is said to have been clergyman. Here, according to the "Cambrian Biography," he died, it is supposed about the year 1769.

His son Robert survived him. In the little memoir above alluded to, which is in Welsh, we have the following particulars with respect to this individual. "About the year 1798 some of the admirers of the works of Gronwy Owen wrote over to his son, begging him to inform them whether his father was alive or dead. It was soon perceived that the son of the glorious Gronwy was quite Americanised, for the surly answer which he gave was that in the first place he must know who was to pay him for his trouble, before he would send any history of his respected father, Mr. Gronwy Owen. This son," says the little memoir, which appeared in 1817, "has also been dead for several years."

In what circumstances Gronwy died it is impossible to say for certainty. The answer of his son Robert to the admirers of his father's genius would seem to argue that he himself was in indifferent circumstances. He must be paid for his trouble or he would give no account of his respected father Gronwy Owen. Would any one have returned such an answer, unless he were in great poverty, or, as the writer of the little memoir suggests, wholly Americanised? But in whatever circumstances Gronwy and his son died, the writer's friend, the grave-digger at Oswestry, entertained an opinion that there is considerable property in America lying unclaimed, which might be secured by the individual who could prove that he was the legitimate heir of the Owens. He said he had a son of great mechanical talent, who some time

ago went to New York in the hope of making his fortune by his trade. He [had] not been successful, and was thinking of going to New Brunswick or Williamsburgh to claim whatever property the Owens had left behind them.

" I wish him success," said the writer, " but have considerable doubts of his meeting any. Supposing Gronwy and his son left anything behind them, depend upon it, it is now in the hands of Yankees, who will take tolerable good care not to part with it. Your son had better come home and assist you in the churchyard. He who can't make a fortune by a trade in America will hardly make one by a pedigree."

After considering the life of Gronwy Owen it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that he was immensely unfortunate. He possessed the poetic gift to an extraordinary degree, but the language in which he wrote prevented his genius being properly appreciated. It will perhaps be observed that he ought not to have written in Welsh, but Welsh happened to be his native language, and his *awen*, his poetical inspiration, could only be exhibited through the medium of the Welsh. He was the greatest poet Britain produced in the eighteenth century, yet as he wrote in the ancient British language and in the ancient British measures, his works could only be appreciated by a few of his own countrymen. So he was unfortunate as a poet, and from no fault of his own.

He was equally unfortunate as a clergyman. He was pious and his morals pure and unimpeachable, deeply learned, well versed in the classic languages and in Syriac and Hebrew. He was, moreover, a fluent and elegant English prose-writer, as certain of his letters prove, but wretched curacies were all that he could obtain. A toilsome and ignoble office was

all that was vouchsafed him, in a foreign land. So who can deny that poor Gronwy was unfortunate, eminently unfortunate, and from no fault of his own ?

Some people are in the habit of saying that all things are ordered for the best. The writer, with all the good will in the world, finds it next to impossible to agree with them. For example, he cannot conceive why a being like Gronwy, eminently endowed with the poetic gift, should have had Welsh for his native language, more especially as the Welsh at the time of Gronwy's birth was confined to a remnant, to a handful ; unless, indeed, Welsh, which some people have said was the language of Paradise, is some day or other, when people are better and cleverer than at the present day, destined to become the language of the whole world. In such an event, indeed, Gronwy's delightful genius may yet be the delight of myriads of millions, and it was quite right and proper that Gronwy's native tongue was Welsh. In the second place, the writer cannot conceive how, if all things are ordered for the best, Douglas the Scot, who starved his curate, should have obtained what he most longed for, a noble bishopric ; whereas Christian Gronwy, who did not flout his poor brother when he burst in upon him at Oswestry, hot and dusty for the roads, and asked him to get him the sextonship of the church at which he himself officiated as curate, was unable to obtain the height of his ambition—a curacy or a little rectory in Wales ; unless, indeed, a certain act which Gronwy committed was one of such a character that all the Christianity in the world could not atone for it, namely the marrying a respectable young woman without a dowry. If such an act, which certainly no young gentleman with a white neckcloth at the present day would think of doing, [were wrong], why then the writer can well conceive

that all things are ordered for the best that Douglas the Scot got a bishopric and that Gronwy could not get a curacy in Wales, but was obliged to flee to the wilderness as if he had committed forgery or something worse. But if that single act, which some people would call at most an act of imprudence, were not as bad as the crime against the Holy Ghost, why then the writer can hardly believe that everything is ordered for the best.

CHAPTER XXVI

And now the writer will offer a few observations on the poetry of this man. The poems of Gronwy, at least such of them as could be collected, were published in the year 1817 at Caernarvon in a volume called "Diddanwch Teuluaidd," or "Domestic Diversion," a collection of pieces written by bards of Anglesey. Gronwy's poems occupy about one half of this volume, the other half being taken up by the works of Lewis Morris, his brother Richard, the Red Bard, and others. It is much to be lamented that Gronwy before he sailed to America did not himself give to the world an edition of his poems, for an edition brought out under his own inspection would not have exhibited, especially in the case of the Latin poems, the glaring errors which shock the eye in the Caernarvon edition, and would doubtless have contained several excellent pieces which he wrote, but which the present edition does not contain and which have been irretrievably lost. The poems of Gronwy printed in the "Diddanwch" amount to fifty-one. The periods at which some of them were composed are given, but to many of the poems there is no date, and we are at a loss to guess when they originated. The earliest of the poems printed seems to be the englyn piece "To God," immediately before going to Oxford. The next in point of date is probably a Latin "Ode to Richard Rathbone," written at

Llanystumdwy in 1742 in the midsummer recess, beginning thus :

" O viro nullos mihi post sodales."

Of the fifty-one pieces three are in Latin, namely, the " Ode to Rathbone " ; an ode on the birthday of George Herbert, an event which the poet has also celebrated in Welsh ; and the piece " Ad Apollinem et Musas," which has been laid before the reader. Of the pieces in Welsh five are translations, namely, two from Horace and three from Anacreon. In our notice we will speak first of the Latin pieces, next of the translations, and lastly of the Welsh poems.

The pieces in Latin are written with great spirit and in the true Horatian style. The " Ode to Rathbone " is highly interesting, less on account of the masterly Latinity which it displays than because it writes of a boyish attachment of Gronwy's of which otherwise we should have no inkling. In this ode a certain Philippa is mentioned, who there is no improbability in supposing to have been his friend's sister. After bidding the Muse [to] speed away to this cherished friend and wish him prosperity, and to tell him that he himself though healthy in body was sick in mind, he adds :

" Deinde, si causam (pudet ah ! fateri)
Postulet, nomen tacite Philippæ
Auribus manda, simul et susurres,
Flagrat amore."

Which love, however, does not seem to have been very desperate, as he thus concludes :

" Adde, sed forsan liceat bibendo
Fallere curas."

The ode on Herbert's birthday contains some sapphics which [may] almost be compared with the best in the " Carmen Seculare." Gronwy's best Latin piece is

decidedly, however, the "Ode to Apollo and the Nine," a poem which would have done honour to the Augustan period.

As we have said, his translations from Anacreon are admirable. The one in which he has been most successful is that of the second ode, *φύσις κέρατα ταύροις*. The celebrated drinking song of the old Greek he has versified in something like the following manner:

> "We know the earth with thirsty lip
> The rain and dew doth drink and sip;
> The trees and forests drink again
> The water drunken by the plain;
> Of the light air the sea drinks free;
> The red sun drinketh from the sea;
> The red sun oft at pride of noon
> Is swallowed by the pallid moon;
> So I full hard my case should think,
> Could I not get my fill of drink;
> As everything in nature quaffs,
> I'll drink, whoever chides or laughs."

His versifications from Horace should rather be called imitations than translations. The first, which stands at the head of his poems, he calls a *cywydd* to the *awen* or Muse. It is an imitation of Horace's "Quem tu, Melpomene," one of those two pieces of which old Scaliger said he would rather be the author than King of Aragon. The other is a cowydd to Lewis Morris in the manner of Horace's eighth ode, "Donarem pateras grataque," in which instead of Mæcenas his own beneficent friend and patron, Lewis Morris, is celebrated. Both pieces have more the style of original Welsh compositions than translations from Horace, but in some instances they are exceedingly faithful to the thoughts and words of Horace, and though their melody is of a different kind to his, in its way it is not inferior. Horace is almost magical in the following four lines:

" O testudinis aureæ
Dulcem quæ strepitum, Pieri, temperas,
O mutis quoque piscibus
Donatura cycni, si libeat, sonum ! "

But is Gronwy less so in his alliterative rendering ?

" O f'Awen dêg ! fwyned wyt !
Di-odid, dawn Duw ydwyt,
Tydi roit, â diwair wen,
Lais Eos i Lysowen ! "

The last line is not almost magical, it is entirely so.

The following translation of Gronwy's imitation of Horace's most celebrated ode will show how far he is faithful to the great Roman, though it will convey no idea of the beauties with which that imitation abounds :

" He whom, when first the light he views,
Thou smil'st upon, fair Lady Muse,
Will not be hero tall and strong ;
What need of strength ? his task is song.
To clench his fist he'll not delight,
By drunken clown when dar'd to fight ;
In wrestling game should he engage,
Though foil'd, he'll neither fret nor rage ;
He'll ne'er be eager fame to gain
For driving coursers o'er the plain ;
The ranks of war he'll not go nigh,
He'll join not in the vanguard's cry ;
But praise he'll gain for minstrel feat
For lays which high the heart make beat,
Such lays as from the lips have roll'd
Of Mona's mighty bards of old.

" Old Wales sums up her bards of worth ;
Full many in Mona had their birth ;
Refulgent in the roll of Fame
With rapture I behold my name ;
Encomiums I've in Merion won
And praise from Mona's every son.
At her last gasp, with hanging head,
Black Envy from our bounds has fled.

" O my sweet Muse, how kind thy part !
The gift of God thou doubtless art ;
Thou could'st endow with thy dear smile
With lark-like voice the lizard vile.
What happiness through thee I've found !
I honour'd am and far-renown'd :
Of Mona's bard, of Gronwy poor,
Ten thousand daily speak and more ;
Where'er I go, respect attends :
Each fain would rank me 'midst his friends.*

" Thanks, gentle Muse, thanks, thanks I say,
I'm happy, come whatever may ;
Without the Muse were life a pain,
Through her the world's good will we gain."

On Gronwy's original pieces it is now necessary to offer some remarks. It is those pieces which have endeared him to his native countrymen, and it is those pieces which will secure him immortality. From an attentive perusal of them it is evident that he was deeply versed in the writings of the ancient bards of his country, and likewise in those of the Latin poets of the Augustan period, and it is also clear that he had paid considerable attention to the poetical literature of England. Ab Gwilym, Horace, and Milton seem to have been his principal favourites. He is principally indebted to these illustrious three for what he has borrowed in his writings, though what he has borrowed is not of sufficient importance to prevent his being considered with justice a great original writer. He lived in the same century with Pope, with Thomson, and with Cowper, but was a more original poet than the last, decidedly the most original of the three.

Of some of his original pieces something has been already said in the course of the narrative of his life.

* Variant :

" Where'er I go, respect I find,
Approving nods and glances kind."

Of one or two of these pieces, particularly "Cywydd y Farn," something more must be said; and we shall then proceed to offer a few observations on certain other of his works which appear to us to deserve most particular notice.

The "Cywydd y Farn Fawr," or the "Ode on the Great Judgment," is the piece to which he devoted the greatest pains and the one which he intended to be the foundation-stone of his fame. It is indeed a truly admirable piece, full of the noblest thoughts, expressions, and images, contained in an almost incredibly brief compass. He asks assistance from God, proclaims that his intention is to sing the Judgment, says how it will come all on a sudden, then describes all the portentous sights that will be seen and sounds which will be heard: the sign of the Son of Man, the blowing of the last trumpet, the roaring of seas, the falling of mountains, the rising of the dead, the appearance of the Son of Mary on His throne, the apostles and the cohorts of heaven around Him, the two books, the one of life and the other of death, in His hands; the judging of the two hosts, the wicked and the good; the headlong tumbling of the former into the flaming abyss, the place of the devil and his angels; and the triumphant mounting of the latter along with the Great Judge to heaven—such is the substance of Gronwy Owen's extraordinary poem of the Farn Fawr.

Of this poem there are two passages which are particularly striking. The first is the description of the rocks falling at the blast of the trumpet, the down-dashing of the top crag of Snowdon, and the roaring and yeasty working of the waters in the harbours, in the seas, and in the shallows:

"Pob creiglethr, crog, a ogwymp,
Pob gallt, a gorallt a gwymp.

Ail i'r âr ael Eryri,
Cyfartal hoewal a hi ;
Gorddyar, Bâr, a Berw-ias
Yn Ebyr, ym Myr, ym Mas."

The second is that which describes what is taking place in hell from the same cause ; the falling of the gates of the furnaces through the vacuum into the pool ; the horror of the fiends, and the consternation of Satan himself, who attempts to hide his head in the darkest corner of his domain :

" Hyll Ffyrnbyrth holl uffernbwll
Syrthiant drwy'r pant draw i'r pwll ;
Cryn y Gethern uffernawl,
A chryn, a dychryn y Diawl ;
Cydfydd y fall â 'i Gallawr,
Câr lechu yn y Fagddu fawr."

We believe that English prose and English verse are quite inadequate to do justice to these passages, and have therefore produced them in their original form, contenting ourselves with affording the reader a general idea of their import. The language in which the extraordinary events of the dreadful day are expressed is as extraordinary as the events themselves. All the dialects of the grand Welsh tongue have been laid under contribution by the author for terms which he thought the most adequate to express the wonderful things of which he treats. Lewis Morris, who was a passionate admirer of the " Farn Fawr," and who for many years was in the habit of carrying it, whilst it yet existed in manuscript, along with him in his journeys, wrote many learned philological notes on various terms and compounds employed by the poet, which were very properly published with it in the Caernarvon edition. So poor Gronwy, like many a poet of far higher repute but not loftier genius, has had his learned commentator.

With respect to the " Cywydd y Gem," the " Ode on the Precious Stone," and that on the birth and pedigree of the Muse, two very celebrated poems of Gronwy, the writer will say nothing, but will content himself with giving the opinion of a far better Welsh scholar and a far more competent general critic than himself, namely, Lewis Morris, the old, kindly Lion of Anglesey. This opinion is extracted from a letter written by Lewis Morris to William Vaughan of Cors y Gedol and Nannau, dated Oct. 7, 1752. " My next shall bring you ' Cywydd y Gem,' which is the last poem he hath written, the subject is search for happiness ; Dedwyddyd is the gem he hath searched for in all corners of the world ; and after a great many fine descriptions and researches, with the help of philosophy and all kind of learning, after consulting Solomon's works, etc., he finds that gem is not to be had among the jewels on crowns, mitres, and caps, nor, in short, anywhere in this world. Then he finds a book, written by another son of David, which tells him where it is to be found, and gives a lively description of that country (Heaven). This is the subject, but nothing can come up with the beautiful turns and expressions throughout the whole, which makes the writer worthy not only of a paltry rectory, but of the favour of all men of sense in our country, and is really not only an honour to ancient Britons, but human nature in general.

" I don't remember that I have sent you a copy of his cywydd, entitled ' Bonedd ac achau yr Awen,' a most excellent piece. The subject of that, as well as all his other subjects, hath something new and surprising in it. He first examines the Greek and Roman writers, and finds the accounts they give of their feigned Muses to be only the dreams of the poets, *Breuddwydion y Beirdd ydynt ;* then he finds

out an original far more ancient than the father of their muses. He finds that the stars of the morning sang the praises of God, and all the host of Heaven. They sang so loud that the comets, or wandering stars, heard them and jumped into their orbs again to join in the chorus :

" ' Fei clywai'r ser disperod
Llemain a wnai rhai 'n i'w rhod.'

Adam heard them out of Paradise and joined in the song ; his wife was so well pleased with his singing that she became a proficient in it, and they sang together the praises of God all day long. Here we have an original of poetry which the superstitious Grecians and Romans knew nothing of ; from hence he carries it to Moses and David, and gives some charming specimens of David's poetry :

" ' Deffro fy nabl parabl per
Ni ganwn emyn gwiwner.'

Then he comes to the great poet Solomon, the author of the Song of Songs :

" ' Fe gant gan, gwiwlan y gwau
Can odiaeth y caniadau :
Pwy ni char ei Ros Saron
Lili a'r draenllwyni llon.'

" These lines will last for ever, in spite of the rust of time and the malice of enemies ; neither fire nor water can destroy them ; nor will they perish till the world falls in pieces, and man is no more.

" I had forgot to give you a specimen of the song sung by the morning stars on the creation of the world :

" ' Ser bore a ddwyreynt
Yn llu i gydganu gynt :
" Perffaith yw dy waith Duw Ion ;
Dethol dy ffyrdd a doethion ;
A mad ac anchwiliadwy,
Dduw mawr ! ac ni fydd ddim mwy." '

When I see in Milton, Dryden, or Pope, such nervous lines and grand expressions as this poem contains, I shall admire them as much as I do Gronow Owen, and not till then." *

Amongst Gronwy's poems there is an exceedingly singular piece, singular from its subject, singular from the manner in which it is handled. The subject is the devil, the manner in which it is handled is highly humorous, the humour of the piece being particularly heightened when we reflect that the writer was a clergyman—not one of your smoking, drinking, fighting clergymen like the present writer's old friend Parson B——, who would drink ye your two gallons of ale of a morning, smoke ye your dozen pipes whilst drinking it, had the longest arm in England and once offered to fight Thomas Cribb for a thousand pounds—nothing of the kind, but a little dark-faced Welsh curate, who though he would take a glass of *cwrw da* was probably never overtaken in his life, who though he occasionally smoked a few whiffs from a short pipe, as he has told us in a witty little epigram, never enveloped himself in a cloud, " because why "—his head would not stand it; and who, as he himself says, " to clench his fist would not delight, though challenged oft by churlish wight," and was upon the whole a nice little unexceptionable clergyman, such as John Wesley, of whom something presently, would have delighted in and perhaps put his mark on, had he met him. Nevertheless Gronwy Owen's " Cywydd," " Hymn," " Ode " or " Address to the Devil," is a piece such as Friar Tuck or Parson B——, who would have licked any two like Friar Tuck, might well have indited after the eighth

* Borrow gives only the opening and closing words of this extract from Morris's letter. The rest has been added from the original in " The Cambrian Register," Vol. II, pp. 501–2.—[Ed.]

quart—the parson after the ninth pipe, for there was no smoking in the Friar's time—always supposing that they had the *awen ;* a truly terrible composition such as would frighten any orderly congregation out of its senses. Not that there is any swearing or blasphemy in it. No, no ! Gronwy was above that ; so, no doubt, was the Friar, and so certainly was the Parson, who would have knocked down anybody who swore in his presence, aye, and would have afterwards dragged him by the heels to the stocks ; but truly terrible from the daring manner in which it handles the arch-enemy, draws his portrait, and gives him advice. It opens to this effect :

" Satan, lord of the smoky hole,
Sire of evil, of swarthy scowl,
Old Judas, hateful hell-dog thou,
Of Man's dear soul the mortal foe ! "

and then proceeds to draw the portrait of the devil, investing him with all the ugliness which tradition and superstition have attributed to him. Yes, every grim feature, every horrible member is there ; the ears of mule, the snout of ape, child of perdition ! the wings of goose, the loathly rump. O, what does not Gronwy say on that subject ! The reader must really learn sweet Welsh if he wants to know :

" Wfft mor gethin y Din dau !
Ffei o lun y ffolennau ! "

Then the tail, which, he says, is that of a *fwbach henffel*, two words which can't be translated, then the . . . really there are things in this ode of Gronwy enough to frighten a person like the writer at present, rather prim and Puritanical in his habits and conversation, almost entirely out of his senses.

After drawing the portrait of Old Judas of the horns as it was never before drawn in verse, he

pretends to be seized with apprehension lest Satan should bear a spite against him and play him unmentionable tricks, as he did a certain celebrated Italian painter, who had represented him on canvas in no flattering manner ; and so to mollify him gives him advice. In his advice he is chiefly urgent on one point, namely, not to let a certain individual come near him, for if he does, adieu to all quiet in hell. This individual is The Miser.

The miser is a personage against which the Welsh bards have always exhibited particular spleen. Sion Tudor, as has been shown in the account given of him, wrote certain most bitter englyns against a miser. But no one has displayed such virulence against the curmudgeon as little respectable Gronwy. If the miser is so bad a person as the poet represents him, it was indeed playing the part of a neighbour to advise Satan not to receive such a lodger, for in the event of his doing so Satan would no longer be master in his own house. Amongst other things he says of him : " If he comes yonder, night or day expect every kind of evil. He is unwearied, whatever rebuffs he may meet, at his function of setting people by the ears. With one word of his mouth he will set three parts of your devils at loggerheads ; and if there happens to be yonder a bag of gold, and the land of hell has always been a fine place for gold, with that hand of his, always particularly clever at filching, he will make a snatch at it, even from the corner of your furnace. I say, drive him away from your threshold, if he comes, and shut the door. Wherever the vagabond may be no other devil is necessary."

Amongst the poems of Burns, the Ayrshire peasant, is a certain " Address to the Deil," in which he calls him all kinds of ill names and checks him with certain

of his practices and misdoings. He then says that he knows he's thinking of paying him off at some future time, when he shall have him in his power, on account of his dissolute life, but hopes to cheat him by repentance, and then concludes in a strain of considerable pathos :

> " But fare-you-weel, Auld Nickie-Ben !
> O, wad ye tak a thought an' men' !
> Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
> Still hae a stake :
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Ev'n for your sake ! "

There is a surprising resemblance in two or three points between this poem of the Welsh bard and that of the Scottish peasant. The openings of the two poems are much the same in every respect.* In both poems the poets remember that the fiend may have an opportunity of doing them ill turns and both tender him advice. Both call him nearly the same names. Their divergences are these. Gronwy dwells more on the personal appearance of the devil as handed down by popular tradition than on his doings and adventures. Burns, except that he calls him " Old Hornie " and " Clootie," says nothing about his personal appearance, but tells us a great many of his adventures and practices, either handed down by tradition or related in the Bible. The advice they both give is widely different. Gronwy bids Old Judas beware of the miser ; Burns advises Old Hornie to repent. In the poem of Gronwy there is no attempt at pathos ; in that of Burns there is.

And now comes the question, which is the best poem ? The writer will speak the truth and fear no one. Which is the best poem, that of Gronwy

* Here a blank is left in the MS. for quotations.—[Ed.]

or of Burns? Why, that of Gronwy, to be sure, little dusky Gronwy, whose letters [were] all written in sweet Welsh from America to his friends in the old country and so nicely nicked the Yankee who opened them. There is no pathos in Gronwy's poem, it is true. Pathos, or any attempt at it, would have spoiled the whole thing. After the things he had said of the devil in the first part of the poem, after doing his best to bring * the devil and all that is said about him by tradition, any attempt at the pathetic would spoil all. He did not say, "I'm wae to think upon that den," or anything like it. What for should he be wae about the den, when the whole affair was bosh? If he had been the angel Milton drew, indeed it would have been another thing. But Gronwy knew better than to say any such thing. Burns was very apt to try to blend very incongruous things, meal and moonstones, for example. In his "Tam O' Shanter" he has utterly spoiled one of the most terrible and pathetic legends of northern fiction by trying to blend things utterly incongruous, the sublime and the ludicrous. He must try to make a merry ballad, must he, out of the old heathen tradition of the severed hand hanging by the horse's tail? And a pretty hand he made of it! He ought not to have tried. A Kæmpe Viser Skald would not; he would have known better.

So much for the "Ode to the Devil." A piece of a very different description now demands some notice. We have no hesitation in saying that of all Gronwy's pieces it is our favourite, and that from the bottom of our hearts we believe it to be the sweetest lyrical poem ever composed. It is an *Awdl* or Rhyme on the marriage of Ellen, daughter of Lewis Morris, and is dated 1754. It is written in a singular

* Meaning not clear here.—[Ed.]

and beautiful measure in a kind of cross-consonancy, alliteration being exhibited most melodiously and agreeably. It consists of thirteen stanzas, each stanza consisting of eight lines, couplets long and short following each other alternately, the two last lines of each stanza having generally the same rhyme, *cerdd a chân*,* that is, music and song, very frequently occurring. But to afford the reader an idea of the metre and melody of the poem it will be well to place the opening stanza before him :

" Ust ! tewch oll ! arwest a chân
Gawr Hai, ac Orohian !
Melys melawd
A Bys a Bawd,
Llon lwyswawd llawen leisiau
Aml iawn eu gwawd, mil yn gwau,
Wawr hoywaf, Orohian
A Cherdd a Chân."

To form an idea of the poem you must suppose a band of minstrels and harpers arriving early on a beautiful summer morning and stationing themselves near the young bride's window " with sweet commendation, with the play of the finger, the thumb and the toe," or as sweet Welsh hath it :

" Melys melawd
A Bys a Bawd."

Imagine them cheering and huzza-ing, telling her the sun of merry countenance has risen above the cliff, that mist is rising from the dingles whiter than the goose's pinion, that it is time for Gwen to shake off slumber and to listen to the merry shout, to rise and put on her garment, her bravest garment of satin flowered over with gold ; to come forth and to proceed along the path strown with green leaves, not to linger, for " Berr yw Oes Dyn " (who will say that Welsh

* MS. " cân." Another example of Borrow's imperfect Welsh. —[Ed.]

isn't sweet ?) " short is the life of man " ; to proceed to church, hundreds singing behind her, who will suddenly make a brave push to gain the church before her, where the pure, holy man is waiting at the altar; to give the bridegroom there her hand, then hey ! back for the marriage banquet, the wine and the mead, enough for a thousand ; not to forget to give to the minstrels provision and wine—for who more deserving ?—not to forget to give away delicate cakes, a dozen or more, that each maiden may have a piece to put under her pillow, which may cause her to dream of a kiss, each maiden's delight being a kiss ; then at night at the throwing of the stocking to be sure to strike the pate of some merry, dark-eyed, light-hearted damsel, not like ever to turn out a sour old maid ; to remember that there is a country of greater glory still above ; to say prayers to the Three in One, and then to give grandboys to her glorious father, to her husband :

" He o Hil
Happus Heppil."

(who will say that Welsh is not sweet ?)—progeny without end, happy, successful, with the blessing of God upon them ; not to be forgetful meanwhile to be bountiful to the poor, for he who gives to the poor lendeth unto God. Let him [imagine to him]self all this and the reader will have some faint idea of the glorious bridal ode of little dusky Gronwy, the tinker's son, of uttermost Mathafarn in the ugly isle of Anglesey.

Gronwy could strum a little upon the harp, having received a few lessons from him who first put the harp into the hand of blind Parry. On the harp he wrote two admirable englyns, of which the following stanzas are faint imitations :

"The harp to every one is dear
Who hateth vice and all things evil.
Hail to its gentle voice so clear,
Its gentle voice affrights the devil.

"The devil cannot the minstrel quell,
He by the minstrel is confounded;
From Saul was cast the spirit fell,
When David's harp melodious sounded."

CHAPTER XXVII

With Gronwy Owen expired the last of the great Welsh bards, the last who thoroughly understood the canons of Welsh song and handled the twice-twelve measures with a master-power. When the writer first sat down to write an account of the poets of Wales he had determined to conclude with Gronwy. On reflection, however, he altered his mind; for though Gronwy was the last very great poet who used the bardic measures and thought and expressed himself in the manner of the old bards, other people arose after him, who produced by their verses a great effect on the minds of the Welsh, and whose names are become household words in the Cambrian country. To omit making mention of at least the most remarkable of these men would be a very great injustice and would cause considerable disappointment amongst those already acquainted with their merits. To be unjust the writer has always endeavoured to avoid; to disappoint reasonable expectations will always give him pain. So he has altered his original determination of concluding his account of Welsh poets with a life of Gronwy. But of bards, strictly speaking, and of bardic poetry he has nothing more to say.

In the Welsh language two descriptions of poetry existed from a very early period, the bardic and common poetry. The bardic poetry was very grand and sonorous but very difficult to be understood, chiefly on account of the wonderful and complex

system of alliteration employed in its composition. What is difficult to be understood can never be very extensively popular, and the bardic poetry, though prized and admired beyond bounds in the halls of Welsh chieftains and princes, could never have been much prized by the people. The upper classes understood it; the people did not. The common poetry was in a free-and-easy metre in which alliteration, if used at all, was used only occasionally. It was neither very grand nor sonorous, but very easy to be understood by those who spoke the Welsh language. This poetry, though despised and laughed at by the bards, who would not vouchsafe it the name of poetry, and seldom or never heard in the hall of the great, was sufficiently prized by the people, to whose comprehensions it was adapted, who sang or repeated it by night at their firesides or at their social festivals, and perhaps took more real pleasure in this simple description of poetry than their superiors did in that of a loftier but more artificial character.

With the principal subjects of bardic poetry the writer is acquainted. Bardic poetry was devoted first and principally to the praises of princes and chiefs, lamentations for the deaths of the mighty and occasionally to abstruse metaphysics. The subjects of popular poetry were no doubt very various, but it is impossible to speak of them with as much positiveness as of those handled by the poetry of the bards, a considerable portion of the latter poetry having been transmitted to us by writing from a very ancient period indeed, whereas none of the ancient popular strains of the Welsh have been wafted down to us either orally or by letters, and little or nothing of their popular poetry antecedent to the middle of the last century being at present in existence. Whatever is

said then of their ancient popular poetry can be only conjectural; whatever notices are given of that of a more modern character must necessarily be very brief and scanty.

It is very probable that the Welsh at an early period had popular ballads in easy metres about the fairies and their king, Wyn * Ab Nudd; likewise about ancient heroes, particularly King Arthur and his knights; also of their marauding expeditions eastward of Offa's Dyke and beyond the whole Welsh [border] from Flint to the southernmost part of Monmouthshire. This is unquestionably very probable; nevertheless it is impossible to speak with absolute certainty on the subject.

They had probably at a very early period their popular love-songs, likewise their burial songs and poetry on the various events of rural life, in the same easy metres, though we cannot speak with absolute positiveness to the fact, no undoubted relics of such poetry being at present [available] to [prove] the fact.†

We know that for two or three centuries previous to the abolition of Popery in Wales the Welsh had their mystery pieces, in which they took great delight. This we know from portions of certain of these poems which are still in existence. These mysteries were dramatic poems in easy verse, founded either on portions of Scripture, generally apocryphal, or fictitious adventures of pseudo-saints. Poems of this description were at one time very popular throughout Europe. But though portions of the Welsh mysteries exist, no entire piece has been preserved, so that not much can be said about them, not a

* MS. "Gwen."

† MS. "at present to the fact." Evidently something has been omitted.—[Ed.]

tenth part of what can be said of the mysteries in another dialect of the Cimbric tongue, the beautiful Cornish, the speech of the writer's own forefathers. In this dialect three entire mysteries have been preserved, which are not only valuable for being the most considerable monuments of the ancient Cornish tongue, but, and more especially, for the genius which they display, all teeming with genuine poetry; and one, namely, "Cain," standing at the head of all pieces of the kind, being far superior to the very best of the mysteries of even the famous Calderon.

But now we come to a kind of popular Welsh poetry of which we can speak with far more positiveness than the mysteries, a kind of poetry to a certain extent derived from them. This kind of poetry, with which [is connected] a very celebrated name which it will be necessary shortly to bring forward, is called the interlude.

There can be little doubt that the description of poem called the interlude sprang from that which had for its name the mystery. The two classes of composition had much in common in matter, manner, and time of representation, and in many other points. Both mysteries and interludes were composed on religious and moral subjects, both contained much that was allegorical, and virtues and vices were frequently personified in both. The mysteries were represented on solemn feasts and occasions, and likewise at merrymakings. So were the interludes. The mysteries were performed sometimes in the priory refectory, sometimes in a hall, and sometimes on the play-stow; the interludes sometimes in a town-hall, sometimes on the village green, most frequently in a barn. Both were encouraged by the clergy of the two periods to which they respectively belonged, the mysteries by the Popish, the interludes

by the Protestant clergy. Both were acted by people of the same class, the young men of the neighbourhoods in which they were represented. The authors both of mysteries and interludes were clever rustics, though there can be no doubt that a monk or priest occasionally wrote a mystery and a village parson an interlude.

Interludes might be called mysteries but for one circumstance. It is but doing justice to the interlude to say that in it there was no superstition, nonsense or blasphemy, as in the mystery. No lying miracles of scoundrel saints were to be found in the interlude, and above all the abominable doll, impiously called the mother of God, did not figure in it. All that kind of thing had been wisely omitted. No, no! the interlude was not a mystery, no more than the Church of England was a boot-kan,* an idol-house like that of Rome.

How the pieces called by the Welsh interludes acquired their name it would be difficult to say. Interlude, as defined by the dictionary, is a piece played in the intervals of festivity. Without pretending to determine the point the writer would suggest that the Welsh interludes were named after the short farces called interludes, performed on the boards of the English theatre between longer pieces of a different character. But though they might be named after these short farces, which they resembled in one point, namely, in having a fool, who was called Sir Wamal, invariably amongst the characters, they were hardly adapted from their length, if we may judge on that point from those of latter times, to be played between other dramatic pieces, being, though not divided into acts themselves, quite as long as five-act dramas generally are.

* So in MS.—[Ed.]

Interludes were very popular in Wales during a space of at least two centuries. Though intended originally to blend harmless amusement with instruction, the representation of them at last became attended with a great many evils, such as Sabbath-breaking, the keeping of late hours, drunkenness, and worse. The interlude at last fell before a power which produced an enormous change in Wales in the manners and religious opinions of the people, in many instances for good, but certainly not invariably. That power was Methodism, of which, and the state of the Church of England at the time, and some time before it made itself felt, it will be now necessary to speak.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE Church of England dates from the commencement of the reign of Edward the Sixth, one of the first princes probably whose mind was ever enlightened by the sunshine of the Christian doctrine. There were hundreds of kings and princes before him in Europe who called themselves and were accounted Christian kings and princes, but who in reality were far from being such. Neither Constantine nor Charlemagne were in reality Christian princes. The first was an adventurer without any real religion, who in the hope of obtaining the purple put himself at the head of a violent religious party, which was aiming at the ascendancy, but in which there was little or nothing of true Christianity. Charlemagne, though professedly a very grand Christian indeed, had nothing of Christianity about him, and indeed knew not what it was. He was a blind and bigoted follower of the being styled the Papa, who, though he calls himself the head of the Christian Church, is not at the head of it, and indeed has always been the grand foe of Christianity. Therefore Charlemagne, being a follower and bigoted slave of a person no Christian himself but in all things anti-Christian, could not be entitled to the name of a Christian prince.

The religion of the Church of England established a form of faith [and] worship devised by the best and most Christian men in England in a manner which appeared to them the best adapted to promote

the glory of God, and there can be no doubt that of all religious systems which have been devised since the time of the very primitive churches, it is the best adapted to that great and holy end. Its articles of faith are based on the Gospel, and its rites and ceremonies present nothing which can offend a truly Christian mind, but, on the contrary, are in every respect calculated to promote in it holy awe and reverence. That England is not a much better and more Christian country than it is, is certainly not the fault of the religion of its Church.

From the time of the first establishment of this religion, it was exposed to all kind of dangers. It suffered from open enemies, from sly traitors, and from weak though well-intentioned people, who thought themselves its friends and lovers; but less from open violence than from other causes. Open violence indeed benefited rather than did it harm. The cruelties of Popish Mary cemented its stones rather than disjointed them. So did the insane attacks of James the Second, an open renegade to Popery and Mariolatry from its Holy Communion. From no source, directly or indirectly, have so many evils accrued to it as from the wretched Stuart family. James the First, partly pedant, partly scoundrel, did all he possibly could to corrupt it by mixing it up with extraneous matters—Sunday games, for example. Charles the First, by trying to identify his own cause with that of the Church, caused many to abandon it who detested him as a cruel and perfidious tyrant. Charles the Second, a secret Papist, tried to ruin it by bestowing its benefices on drunkards and profligates. James the Second, though he did no harm by his open attacks, did it incalculable damage by causing a split amongst its members. The members of the Church of England,

after he had retired to France, became divided into two parties, jurors and non-jurors. The jurors were the clergy and their followers who took the oaths of allegiance to the Prince of Orange; the non-jurors those who, though they detested the religion of James, still considered him the rightful monarch and refused to take the oaths of allegiance to the great liberator and his immediate successor. The two parties hated each other from the bottom of their hearts. The jurors called the others Papists; the non-jurors, with a great deal of truth, gave the others the lie. And how shall a house stand which is divided within itself? During the first part of the eighteenth century the members of the Church of England, jurors or non-jurors, thought more of politics than religion. One third of them never went to church, but to non-juring meetings, and the morals of both parties were anything but scriptural.

Of the two parties probably the non-jurors were the most respectable. The non-juring clergy were certainly more learned and infinitely more zealous for the principle which they deemed right than those who took the oaths. They underwent great privations for conscience' sake, being supported chiefly by charity, whereas a single word from their lips would have had the effect of procuring them comfort and in some instances affluence. The rulers of the land would have gladly given to all of them benefices and to some of them bishoprics, but them they would not take. So the Government was obliged to bestow Church appointments upon men in general their inferiors in every respect, many of whom would have taken any oaths, provided they could have advanced themselves by so doing. People of this description of course set but a poor example to their flocks and were not much respected by them, whereas the

non-juring clergy showed at least, by refusing to take the oaths, that they were honest men. So the non-juring clergy being upon the whole men more honest and zealous than the clergy who took the oaths, it is natural to suppose that their followers had purer morality instilled into their minds than the followers of the others, the general conclusion being that of the two parties, the one which refused the oaths, laity as well as clergy, was the most entitled to respect.

But in the course of time the non-juring party became nearly extinct; few people went to non-juring chapels, and the schism in the Church was nearly healed; but essential religion during the brawls of the Church had been nearly forgotten, so after the schism was healed there was little zeal in the Church. The services and ceremonies were carried on in a very languid manner. There were few stirring sermons in the pulpit, and there was a good deal of yawning and occasional snoring in the pews. Now the absence of zeal and proper behaviour are much to be lamented; but the absence of one thing in a Church is never to be lamented, and one thing was not to be found in the Church of England at the period alluded to, the absence of which at the present period would be a blessing. That thing, that loathsome thing, was puppyism, the superabundance of which at the present day in the Church of England is the greatest evil that it has ever had to deplore, an evil which is daily and weekly carrying away the souls of hundreds of its members to Rome and to the country which lies beneath it. The curate of Oswestry about the middle of the last century was not ashamed to see his brother in the desk below him officiating as clerk, nor were the congregation a bit scandalised at the sight. What curate of the present day but would be ashamed to have his brother for a clerk? What

congregation of the present day but would be ashamed of their curate, provided his brother were the clerk?

But notwithstanding the thing of all things the most loathsome did not defile the Church, its condition was truly lamentable both in England and Wales. In England the generality of the clergy had little zeal, little authority, unless when they happened to be Justices of the Peace. They performed the services of the Church in a manner which showed they thought the sooner they were got over the better; and the generality of the laity imagined that if they went to church once on the Sabbath, however they might yawn or slumber, they were doing everything that was necessary for the salvation of their souls. Idle fellows, wrestlers, appeared at church, basking in the churchyards during the times of divine service unreprehended; cricket-playing was not only permitted but encouraged by many clergymen on the village green on a Sabbath evening, frequently under the eyes of the clergyman, who would smoke his pipe, seated on the bench of the village ale-house, his tankard of ale beside him. The houses of entertainment throughout the year were filled from morning till night on the holy day with disorderly and drunken company.

In Wales the state of the Church was not more satisfactory than in England, indeed it was rather less. The Welsh clergy as a body had not more zeal than the English and were rather their inferiors in learning and propriety of behaviour. The laity were exceedingly ignorant of God's ordinances, and their behaviour in general was more allied to heathenism than Christianity. Clergy preached and laity went to church, it is true, but the generality of the clergy might almost as well have been silent, and nine-tenths of those who went to church might

almost as well have kept away. The writer has read several books, both in Welsh and English, connected with the state of religion in Wales about the middle of the last century, and he hesitates not to say that some of the details given have filled him with horror, though he is not over and above straight-laced, for though certainly somewhat so he has no sympathy with those who shake their heads at the mention of a hot dinner on the Sabbath. The following is an account of the manner in which the Sabbath used to be desecrated in Wales, extracted from a highly instructive book called "Methodism in Wales." "There is before me the history of a hamlet in Denbighshire which presents a fair picture of the state of the country at this time. Baskets of fruits such as apples and plums, when they were in season, were brought to the village on a Sunday and exposed for sale. The butcher would send his meat and the shoemaker his shoes, just as if there were a common fair; and, above all, in harvest-time the farmers and reapers would avail themselves of the opportunity which they had of meeting together after service, and would agree about the labours of the week to come. The sexton, after service, would hasten into the churchyard to announce the sports which would be held in various places in the neighbourhood, in just the same manner as they now give notice in the chapels [of] the manner in which the afternoon and evening services will be held in the neighbouring places. Many would collect in the church on Sunday mornings, especially in harvest-time, merely for the purpose of finishing their labours afterwards. And there was no quarrel between the minister and the congregation about a matter like this; the struggle between them would be which should get first to the fruit-baskets. Yes, the sexton would take the

opportunity at the proper season of saying sometimes from the altar to the parishioners: 'Remember to help in getting in my master's turf.' He did not say, 'Remember the Sabbath day and the holiness thereof,' or 'Remember your duty and your obligations to God,' but 'Remember to help in getting in the parson's turf.'"

Amongst the Sunday afternoon diversions the interludes stood very prominent. In the town-hall of Bala interludes were regularly performed every Sunday afternoon, and were very much patronised by the *respectable* people of the neighbourhood. Afternoon and evening services were seldom performed in the churches. So if the state of the Church was bad in England, it was still worse in Wales. But a spiritual revolution was at hand.

CHAPTER XXIX

Much about the same time several individuals of remarkable powers of mind began to feel a great deal of anxiety, which occasionally amounted to horror, about the state of their souls. "What a dreadful thing," each said to himself, "it would be if I were to die this moment, to find myself damned the next! And yet if I were to die this moment in the spiritual condition in which I am, could I expect anything but damnation, for should I not richly deserve it? Certainly I should, but what a dreadful thing to be damned! O, what must I do to escape from damnation? What must I do to be saved? In the first place I must alter my courses, and then, ah, what shall I do then? Well, in the first place I'll alter my ways." Such were the words, as soon as their consciences began to be awakened, of Whitfield and Wesley in England, of Howel Harris and Daniel Rowlands in Wales, men destined to accomplish truly marvellous things; the two first in a good cause with all the energy and at the same time the method of Ignatius Loyola in a wrong, the two last with more than the eloquence in the cause of Christ of Francis Xavier in that of Ignatius and the Pope. Well, in the first place all these men did alter their ways. They then took to reading the Scripture, and all came to the conclusion that no man can be saved but by faith in the efficacy of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ; and then they each and all became

inspired with a desire to preach the Gospel of Christ to everybody, and to tell everybody the conclusion to which they themselves had arrived. And to work they went, doing things which had never been done since the time of the Apostles. All these men were of the Church of England. They were not of the class of people called Dissenters, but members of the Church of Edward the Sixth, the Church to which belongs the best system of faith and worship ever devised. Two of them, Rowlands in Wales and Whitfield in England, were ministers of that Church. The term Methodist, which the men of the revival and their followers, whether Welsh or English, adopted as their designation, had its origin in the methodical manner in which Whitfield and Wesley and some other serious young men pursued Scriptural studies in concert at Oxford; but it should be known and borne in mind that notwithstanding Wesley and Whitfield and their colleagues at Oxford were the first Methodists, they were not exactly the first men of the religious revival. Howel Harris and Daniel Rowlands in South Wales had their religious convictions before the men of Oxford; and both, independent of each other and unknowing of each other, preached to the men of South Wales before Whitfield and Wesley preached to any portion of the English. Whitfield and Wesley soon fell into a difference upon a particular point of faith; and the English Methodists were divided into two bodies, the Whitfieldian or Calvinistic Methodists and the Wesleyan or Arminian. The Welsh Methodists, however, continued undivided, true to Calvinism, which is in fact the doctrine of the Church of England, the doctrine entertained by Cranmer and Grindal; and when Whitfield visited Wales, which he did in the year 1741, a great association was formed, at the head of which he was placed, on which account

the Welsh Methodists of the present day are called Whitfieldian or Calvinistic Methodists.

The writer has no intention of entering into a history of Methodism, either Welsh or English. A few brief remarks are all which he will offer. It would have been well for the interests of the Church if the Methodists had met with treatment widely different from that which they experienced. Men who sought to infuse into the Church something of religious zeal and fervour, and who uttered nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Church, nor even against its forms and ceremonies, were persecuted as if they had endeavoured to introduce into Britain the creed of which Omar was the champion. The lay preachers were pelted in England and Wales by mobs headed by the gamekeepers of reverend Justices of the Peace, and threatened to be committed as rogues and vagabonds provided they did not hold their tongues. Ordained ministers were threatened to be turned out of their churches, provided they did not keep within their parishes and refrain from going to places where the Gospel had not been heard in the memory of man. But, notwithstanding the efforts of its enemies, Methodism throve. The lay preachers would not hold their tongues, and made converts by shoals, till at last it became very difficult to get a mob to stone a preacher, the very gamekeepers frequently giving their reverend masters warning and humbly begging the favour of being permitted to become the preachers' clerks. The ordained ministers could not be induced to keep within their own bounds, but went about preaching wherever they pleased. To what part of the British dominions did not that child of thunder, mighty Whitfield, go ? To what part of Wild Wales did not that miracle of eloquence, Daniel Rowlands, go ? But your bishops and reverend

magistrates would not be wise; the portly parsons would go on calling the preachers hard names, when they could no longer raise mobs to pelt them. Bishops worth a hundred thousand pounds must put their threats into execution. George Whitfield and Daniel Rowlands are turned out of the Church, the consequence being that half of the English seceded from the Church, and nine-tenths of the churches in Wales became, to use the terrible words of the Welsh apostle, "mansions for owls."

O, what clever people are your Popes and Cardinals compared with the Bishops and Archbishops, the reverend Justices and game-preserving parsons of the writer's own dearly beloved Church! Did they turn out Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, and that wonderful fellow * . . . when they attempted to introduce a certain amount of fire and energy into languid and almost effete Popery? No, no! They knew better; by conciliating, as they did, such men as Loyola and his disciples they saved Popery, at least for a time; whereas the Bishops and Archbishops, the reverend game-preservers and parsons weighing twenty stone, by the manner in which they treated Rowlands and Whitfield and men almost as good, gave such a blow to their own. However, let us live in hope, and never forget that after all there is no such a church as the Church of England in the whole world.

A vast deal of spiritual good and a wonderful reformation of manners followed the spread of Methodism in England and its almost universal adoption in Wales. A knowledge of the truths of the Gospel became almost universal; the Sabbath was better observed; profane and obscene language became less common; drunkenness and other vices

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

received a considerable check. People, even those who did not go over to the Methodists, became more serious and thoughtful. The very high-church clergyman was induced to modify his ways. He kept his gun, it is true, but no longer followed the fox on horseback with bugle-horn, or if he occasionally did, his blast was no longer the blast of old, and he had a suspicious and skulking look and occasionally glanced around, as if he had a lurking idea that his old friends in the chase might be saying to each other, "What the devil is that parson here for? Why an't he in his study, trying to write a new sermon?" Two or three of them, men, it is true, who had passed their seventy-third year, were absolutely seen visiting the sick, the fat butler of each carrying in one hand a basket in which there was part of a sirloin of beef, some Yorkshire pudding, and a bottle of port, and in the other the folio pulpit Prayer-book of 1700. Very many of them became subscribers to the glorious society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. One, rather a youngish man, as early as the year 1760, not only says he should no longer preserve, but flung up the Commission of the Peace which he had held, declaring that the duties of a Church minister and those of an active magistrate were incompatible; aye, and commenced preaching sermons rather smacking of High Church and with now and then a clever skit on schismatics, the noise of which caused his church to be filled twice every Sunday. Such men as Blair arose in the Church; then your evangelical preachers, the best of whom was Harvey, began to be heard in the Church—all along of Methodism—then, to crown the whole, uprose the wonderful Bible Society, not exactly a Church institution, it is true, but chiefly supported by Church-people, whose greatest man, the stalwart

Andrew Brandram, who directed its proceedings for many years, was a staunch Churchman; which institution, more feared by Pope and Cardinals, as the Man in Black says in "Lavengro," than anything else on earth, would certainly never have sprung up but for the spread of Methodism. Therefore, when all the facts above stated are duly considered, who can say that Methodism has not done a great deal of good?

Yet it is possible for well-intentioned people to go too far and to be over-zealous. It is a capital thing to put down Sabbath-breaking, but it is not a capital thing to turn the Sabbath into a day of gloom, of sighing and groaning and of sour-face-making. It is a capital thing to check profane and obscene language and barbarous exhibitions such as bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and the like; but it is not a capital thing to persuade people that a merry and jocund laugh is sinful, and that racing, wrestling, cudgel-playing, and using one's fists occasionally will hurl people down to the nethermost pit. It is a capital thing to teach people to read the Bible, but it is not a capital thing to make them believe that all reading but Bible-reading is to be avoided, and that books like "Moll Flanders" * and "Amelia" are to be reprobated as Satanic productions. Methodism has certainly accomplished a great many excellent things, which the writer has pointed out, but it has certainly done, or tried to do, a great many things which are not excellent, and those things the writer has fearlessly mentioned along with and in contrast with the things which are.

There can be little doubt after all that it was the fault of the Church that Methodism became mixed up with much that is not only nonsensical but hurtful.

* MS. "The Flanders."—[Ed.]

The Church called the Methodists fellows and vagabonds and all kinds of names which they ought not to have been called. The consequence was that the Methodists, who after all, poor creatures, were men, felt a certain rising of gall. They did not strike out, neither did they swear, for their principles would not allow them to do either, but they compressed their lips, knit their [brows], and turned up their eyes to heaven ; and the writer would have the Church look to itself whenever it makes a Methodist or Whitfieldian, heterodox or orthodox, turn up his eyes to heaven. The result was that they did a great many things and said a great many things which they would not have done or said, had they been treated as the great Biscayan and his followers were treated by the Church so-called t'other side the water. Ah, the Church would have been much stronger, and religion would have presented a much less heterogeneous aspect than it does at present, had the early Methodists been treated something like men.

Those who are only acquainted with the workings of Methodism in England have a very faint idea of its operations in Wales. The battle in Wales between the Methodists and their opponents was much more terrible than in England, for the Welsh are by nature much more excitable than the English ; but the result of the battle was much more astounding. Perhaps there was not in the world such a set of mad-drinking, fierce-fighting, singing, yelling, sight-loving people as the Welsh were a hundred years ago, and certainly at present such a steady, sober, respectable set of people [is not] to be found in the whole world. The writer would consider them thoroughly subdued, but for a certain strange and wild gleam which he has occasionally observed when talking to them about Glendower and the coiling serpent—not the coiling

serpent of Scripture, about which the writer never talked to them, but the serpent of Horsa. No cock-fighting, no bull-baiting, no boxings between the champions of rival glens, no wrestling, no running, no—strange enough there is plenty of admirable swimming amongst them—but no interlude-playing, that species of diversion to which at one time they were so wonderfully attached.

The preachers showed no mercy to the interlude. The interlude was a Church diversion, and the Church had called them in Welsh (the Church can certainly be occasionally rather foul-mouthed) fellows and vagabonds. No, the preachers showed no mercy to the interlude, which, by the bye, had been turned against them with considerable effect. They anathematised it, and converted a great many of the interlude writers and players. Of the greatest of all interlude writers and players, Twm o'r Nant,* that is, Tom of the Dingle, who would never allow himself to be converted but remained faithful to the Church of England, fighting, drinking, and interlude-playing to the very last, the writer now proposes to say something.

Thomas Edwards, the carter-poet, generally called Twm o'r Nant or Tom of the Dingle, shortly before his death, at the instigation of his friends, sat down and wrote a short account of his life in Welsh. From this life, one of the most entertaining pieces of biography which have ever been presented to the world, the present writer will make copious extracts in the account which he proposes to give of this individual, certainly one of the most extraordinary characters which any time or country has produced.

* In this MS. Borrow writes Twm O Nant, but the form used in "Wild Wales" has been adopted.—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XXX

Thomas Edwards was a poet—that he was one is proved by the vast impression which his interludes produced amongst his countrymen, who have called him the Welsh Shakespear—but he was something more than a poet. He was what the poet very, very seldom is—a man. Poets in general as men are certainly very poor creatures. They are weak, cowardly, and effeminate. Horace, one of their princes, says so. If their verses will not support them, which they very seldom do, they are quite helpless and would starve unless somebody were to take pity upon them, give them a place, a sinecure, or bed and board, which they are always most happy to accept, for in them there is no independence of spirit, no noble pride, though an enormous deal of vanity. Their Elysium is the table of a great man whom they flatter, who treats them with gentlemanly condescension, and whose wife and daughter pet, flatter, and despise them, taking particular good care never to run away with them. O, poets in general are certainly very poor creatures when considered as men, though certainly there have been poets who, besides writing verses, could play a bold part in the drama of life, could build and sail a ship like Lewis Morris, cleave to the chine like Taillefer at Hastings, hedge, ditch, drive a cart or load a cart like Thomas Edwards, who took much more pride in being considered the first carter in Wales than the best poet;

which individual after this slight exordium the writer will permit to speak for himself.

" I am the first-born," says Thomas Edwards, " of my father and mother, and from the side of the last spring from certain mighty people who inhabited the Vale of Clwyd, such as Cawryd, Cadfan, and others ; though the race had become little better than the dregs of the people before I sprang up, the most part of them being poor and utterly ignorant with respect to book-learning, having no other intelligence than what they inherited from Nature in common with the other creatures. From the loins of such people I was brought into the world in a place called Lower Penparchell in the parish of Llanefydd, on land which was once the inheritance of Iolo Goch, Lord of Llechryd, whose house was at Coed y Pantwn and who and whose children are buried in the abbey of Eglwysegl, not far from Llangollen.

" It is probable that my grandfather and grandmother were soon tired of having such people as we were in their house. My parents were obliged to move to another corner of the domain, to a place called Coed Siencyn (Jenkyn's Wood), where they dwelt about a year or somewhat more, and this was before the great frost, when the markets were so dear ; but in the following spring they flitted to the Nant or Dingle beside Nantglyn, in a corner of the parish of Henllan, where there is a place called Coom Pernant or Cwm Abernant, where one John Parry lived, who was a poet and owner of the place. Now the Nant was the middlemost of three homesteads which are in the coom and are called the Upper, Middle, and Lower Nants, and it so happened that in the Upper Nant there were people who had a boy of about the same age as myself ; and forasmuch as they were better-to-do in the world than my parents, they having

only two children, whilst mine had ten, I was called plain Tom of the Dingle, whilst he was denominated Thomas Williams.

"But let me not get on too fast! I remember that when I was little more than three years of age I was returning with my mother from the fountain, who had been there to fetch water, and it so happened that against the corner of the school-house there stood a ladder some eight yards long, which had been placed there to prevent the wind carrying off the thatch. Now I, instead of following my mother, must needs clamber up it to the very top of the school; and an uncle of mine, who was my father's brother and my godfather, coming past, I said to him, 'See here, Daddy Godsire, where I am.' He using abundance of pretty words to me, lest I should become terrified and break my neck, came and took me down, but he took especial care not to let my mother know anything about the matter that time, lest she should miscarry, as she was then big with her third child.

"Shortly after this my mother left me one morning in bed with my sister, and went to the house of a neighbour on some piece of business. When I awoke I began to call upon my mammy, but receiving no answer I put my shoes on my feet and my hat on my head and waddled away to my grandfather's house stark naked. Granny, good creature, took me and put me into a warm bed; presently who should come but my mother, wondering where I could be, with my clothes in her apron and the birch-rod in her hand. Then ensued a pretty turmoil between granny and mammy, one trying to help me and the other to chastise me; it was a mercy that my life was preserved between them. My mother, to do her justice, kept a sharp eye upon me as I grew up. She never allowed me to swear or take the name of God in vain,

and by the blessing of Providence the effects of her discipline have clung to me throughout. I have never been a swearer or a blasphemer. When I was a child there was ever a strong fear of God upon me and a dread that if I called upon the devil he would instantly come and take me.

"When I was about six or seven years of age, a free school was established in Nantglyn and I was permitted to go there to learn my letters; but there was much talk amongst the sage old women of the country. However, in a little time the small-pox made its appearance, and I fell sick with it and was obliged to stay at home, and when I got the better of it I was too strong to be able to afford to lose work and time in going to school. I was obliged to learn to drive the oxen at the plough or in the cart instead of learning to read. My mother, however, took occasionally some pains to keep the letters in my remembrance.

"Time passed on till I was about eight years old, and then in the summer I was lucky enough to be sent to school for three weeks, and as soon as I had learnt to spell and read a few words I conceived a mighty desire to learn to write. So I went in quest of elderberries to make me ink, and my first essay in writing was trying to copy on the sides of leaves of books the letters of the words which I read. It happened, however, that a shop in the village caught fire and the greater part of it was burnt, only a few trifles being saved; and amongst the burnt fragments my mother got for a penny a number of sheets of paper burnt at the edges, and sewed them together to serve as copybooks for me. Without loss of time I went to the smith at Waendwysog, who wrote for me the letters on the upper part of the leaves, and careful enough was I to fill the whole paper with scrawlings which looked for all the world like crow's-feet. I went

on getting paper and ink and something to copy, now from this person and now from that, until I learnt to read Welsh and to write it at the same time.

" I wrote out a great deal of poetry and two books of interludes before I was nine years of age, and when they saw my application to study, many individuals began to reproach my parents for not procuring me some instruction in English. After much [discussion] they suffered me to go to the school in the village. After spending a fortnight in learning English, and that is the whole, I was obliged to come home to do something for my bread, and towards maintaining the other children.

" Nevertheless, being very much addicted to learning I went through with it. When I returned from the field at meal-time I would go to the dresser, where there was a drawer in which were my papers, and then I would sit down and write, notwithstanding all my parents' entreaties that I would take my food ; and the most that I would do sometimes was to snatch up a piece of bread-and-butter in my hand.

" Once upon a time when I was driving my team near the hedge, a thorn or briar tore the lappet from off my coat, whereupon my father struck me, cursing and abusing me, saying that I liked better to handle my accursed papers than to cut down the brambles which tore my clothes and pulled the wool off the sheep. I forthwith fell to snivelling and crying, and promised that if ever I got home I would burn all my papers, and in my rage that same night I burnt at least a peck of papers, such as they were.

" I was by this time about ten years of age, and notwithstanding I had burnt my books my old nature would not let me rest till it had procured me other means of continuing my scribbling on paper. I made acquaintance [with] an old cooper near Nantglyn,

who was much addicted to writing out the works of the poets, such as songs [and] carols.

"Shortly after this I made acquaintance with another who had the same passion for books, namely an old man who lived in Pentre'r Foelas,* who was reader in the chapel on Sundays and made and mended clocks at other times. From him I often obtained the loan of old books. Through one thing and the other I learnt to write very tolerably in this neighbourhood. Subsequently I became very intimate with another who was a poet, though he could neither read nor write, but he was a poet by nature, having a Muse wonderfully glib at making triplets and quartets. He was nicknamed Twm Tai of the Moor. He made an englyn for me to put in a book in which I was inserting all the verses I could collect :

> "'Tom Evan's the boy for hunting up songs,
> Tom Evan to whom the best learning belongs ;
> 'Twixt his two pasteboards he verses has got
> Sufficient to fill the whole country, I wot.'

Tom or Thomas Evans I was in the habit of writing my name, before I went to school for a fortnight in order to learn English, but then I altered it into Thomas Edwards, because Evan Edwards was the name of my father and I should have been making myself a bastard, had I continued calling myself by my first name. However, I had the honour of being secretary to the old poet. When he made a song he would keep it in his memory till I came to him. Sometimes after the old man had repeated his composition to me, I would begin to dispute with him, asking him whether the thing would not be better another way, and he could hardly keep from flying into a passion with me for putting his work to the torture.

* In "Wild Wales" Borrow has Pentre y Foelas. The village is now known as Pentre Foelas.—[Ed.]

"Before I was twelve years old seven lads of Nantglyn set about playing an interlude, and they took me with them, my parents being half-loth, half-willing that I should go with them, to play the part of a girl, because I had the best voice for singing of any one in the neighbourhood. I got the part to learn at a drinking-bout at Bach near Melin Segrwyd, where I spent the first threepence which I ever spent for ale. So we learnt to play tolerably well according to the fashion of the time. Besides being a boy very fond of reading and writing I was very ready at singing. I began and nearly finished an interlude founded on a book by John Bunyan called 'The Spiritual Marriage,' keeping the matter a great secret. However, a young fellow from Anglesey passing by the Nant got a night's lodging. He was a scholar with something of the poet in him. I out of love and kindness must needs be showing him everything I had, and he, when he went away, stole from me the greater part of my books. This event so disheartened me that I almost determined to write no more poetry in future.

"I went out with some other lads from the neighbourhood of Nantglyn to play interludes when I was about thirteen years old. If any one of us knew more about playing than the other, it was perhaps I. My natural inclination had by this time become too strong to be concealed, and this person and that person were beginning to say positively that I should turn out a poet, and my father and mother were always snarling at me, not being able to bear the idea that I should turn out an affliction to them. Yet however great the disgrace or affliction to my family or myself, a poet I was destined to become.

"Before I was quite fourteen I had made an interlude, and when my father and mother heard about

it, they did all they could to induce me to destroy it. However, I would not burn it, but gave it to Hugh of Llangwm, a celebrated poet of the time, who took it to Llandyrnog, where he sold it for ten shillings to the lads of the place, who performed it the following summer. But I never got anything for my labour save a sup of ale from the players when I met [them]. This at the heel of other things would have induced me to give up poetry, had anything been able to induce me.

"I made two interludes, one for the people of Llanbedr in the Vale of Clwyd, and the other for the lads of Llanarmon in Ial; one on the subject of Naaman's leprosy, and the other about Hypocrisy, which was a refashionment of the work of Richard Parry of Diserth. When I was young I had such a rage or madness for poetising that I would make a song on almost anything I saw, and it was a mercy that many did not kill me or break my bones on account of my evil tongue. My parents often told me that I should have some mischief done to me, if I went on in the way in which I was going. Once on a time, being with some companions as bad as myself, I happened to use some very free language in a place where three lovers were, who were in the habit of keeping company with a young lass of my neighbourhood, who lived in a place called Tŷ Celyn, or the House of the Holly Wood. I said in discourse that they were the cocks of Tŷ Celyn. The girl heard me and conceived a spite against me on account of my scurrilous language. She had a brother who was a cruel fighter. He took the part of his sister and determined to chastise me.

"One Sunday evening he shouted to me as I was coming from Nantglyn; our ways were the same till we got nearly home. He had determined to give me

a thrashing, and he had with him a piece of oak-stick just suited for the purpose. After we had taunted each other some time as we went along, he flung his stick to the ground and stripped himself stark naked. I took off my hat and my neckcloth and took his stick in my hand, whereupon he ran to the hedge, took a stake, and straight we set to like two furies. After fighting some time our sticks were shivered to pieces and quite short. Sometimes we were upon the ground, but did not give up fighting on that account. Many people came up and would have fain have separated us, but he would not let them on any account. At last we agreed to go and pull fresh stakes, and then we went at it again until he could no longer stand. The marks of this battle are upon him and me to this day. At last, however, covered with a gore of blood he was dragged home by his neighbours. In a dreadful condition he was, and many thought that he would die. On the morrow there came an alarm that he was dead, whereupon I escaped away across the mountain to Pentre'r Foelas to the old man Sion Dafydd, to read his old books. After having read some things on a chest beside a window, methought I smelt a very disagreeable smell. At first I imagined that the old man might have put away some dirt behind the chest, but after searching into the matter I discovered that it was my arm which smelt, the bruises which it had received during the battle having become putrid. From that place, after having had my bruises tended a little by an old woman, I went as a fugitive, skulking about during a fortnight or more in the parish of Bryn Eglwys in Ial, in a place called Penau'r Banciau (tops of the bluffs), sometimes threshing, sometimes holding the plough, digging, or anything that was needed, taking always particular caution lest any one should find me out. At length

I went home, where I heard that my adversary was just beginning to lift his head. I was threatened a little with the law, but not much. In consequence of this fray, at the request of my mother, I gave up fighting much in future, lest something worse should happen to me.

"As I could not conquer my natural bent I made another interlude, the theme of which was 'Jacob stealing away the blessing of Esau,' which piece was acted by the lads of Nantglyn and myself. After this I composed the interlude of 'Jane Shore.' This was first acted by the lads of Llanefydd and subsequently by those of Llanbedr in the Vale of Clwyd. When I was about twenty years of age I made an interlude about Cain and Abel, intended to be acted by four. I was the fourth, the others were lads of Llansanan. We continued playing it occasionally for about a year. Afterwards, however, being somewhat pricked by conscience, and likewise having fallen in love with a young woman who was religiously inclined, I on my arrival at a place called Roe Wen, near Tal y Cafn, cast my Tom Fool's cap over the side of the ferry-boat into the river Conway.

"In my twenty-fourth year I married my wife, on the 19th day of February in the year 1763, and on the 26th of December of the same year my wife brought a little daughter into the world. We at first established ourselves in the Bylchau or passes, by the side of the road from Nantglyn to Llansanan, in a farm which belonged to the Nant. My people, however, especially my sister, were against our remaining there, so I took a little place below the town of Denbigh called Ale Fowlio. There we were about two years, buying hay and hiring pasturage in the neighbourhood round about, and keeping three cows and four horses. My business was carrying

wood from Gwaenynos to Rhuddlan, and I soon excelled every one of the other carriers in loading and in everything connected with the management of wood, on which account I must needs be frequently helping them and giving them a turn in the wood, until my wife began to scold me for being such a fool as to keep my horses from their food and to work myself to death for the sake of other people. So my wife counselled me to go and load in the afternoon, when nobody would be about, and offered to go with me and help me, and so she did. She, dear creature, assisted me for some time, but as she was with child and so not exactly fitted to turn the roll of the crane with levers of iron, I formed the plan of hooking the horses to the rope in order to raise up the wood which was to be loaded ; and by long teaching the horses to pull and to stop, I contrived to make loading a much easier task both to my wife and myself. Now this was the first hooking of horses to the rope of the crane which was ever done either in Wales or England. Subsequently I had plenty of leisure and rest instead of toiling amidst other carriers."

CHAPTER XXXI

Above I have given from his own narrative some account of the early years of Tom of the Dingle. The reader must be struck with the enthusiasm which he displayed in the acquirement of knowledge, enthusiasm which was never quelled by obstacles which would have dispirited millions of others, his dogged resolution in perhaps the most desperate single-handed combat ever recorded, and likewise the energy with which he set to work to get a livelihood in a calling requiring not only strength, but skill. Gladly would I translate his whole narrative, every part of which abounds with interest. Want of space, however, prevents me. I shall therefore content myself with giving a brief summary of the rest of his life, except in a few instances, where I shall again allow him to speak for himself.

Leaving Ale Fowlio he took up his abode nearer to Denbigh, and continued carrying wood. Several of his horses died, and he was soon in difficulties, and was glad to accept an invitation from certain miners of the county of Flint to come and play them an interlude. As he was playing them an interlude called "A Vision of the Course of the World," which he had written for the occasion and which was founded on and named after the first part of the work of Master Ellis Wyn, he was arrested at the suit of one Mostyn of Calcoed. He, however, got bail, and partly by carrying and partly by playing, soon raised money

sufficient to pay his debt. He then made another interlude called "Riches and Poverty," by which he gained a great deal of money. He then wrote two other interludes, one called "The Three Associates of Man, namely the World, Nature, and Conscience"; the other entitled "The King and the Justice, and the Bishop and the Husbandman," both of which he and certain of his companions acted with great success. After he had made all that he could by acting these pieces, he printed them. When printed they had a very considerable sale, and Tom was soon able again to set up as a carter. He went on carting and carrying for upwards of twelve years, at the end of which time he was worth with one thing and the other upwards of three hundred pounds, which was considered a very considerable property about ninety years ago in Wales. He then in a luckless hour, when, to use his own words, he was at leisure at home like King David on the top of his house, mixed himself up with the concerns of an uncle of his, a brother of his father's, probably the same person who took him off the roof of the school-house when he was a child. He first became bail for this man and subsequently answerable for the amount of a bill, which a lawyer whom he had employed sent him in. His becoming answerable for the amount of this bill nearly proved the utter ruin of our hero. His uncle failed and left him to pay the bill. The lawyer then took out a writ against him. It would have been well for Tom if he had paid the money at once, but he went on dallying and compromising with the lawyer till he became terribly involved in his web. To increase his difficulties work became slack, so at last he packed up his things upon his carts and fled with his family, consisting of his wife and three daughters, into Montgomeryshire. The

lawyer, however, soon got information of his whereabouts and threatened to arrest him. Tom, after trying in vain to arrange matters with him, fled into South Wales to Carmarthenshire, where he carried wood for a timber-merchant and kept a turnpike gate which belonged to the same individual. The old cancer, however, still followed him; his horses were seized for the debt. His neighbours, however, assisted him and bought in at a low price the horses when they were put up for sale, and restored them to him for what they had given. Even then, however, the matter was not satisfactorily settled, for years afterwards, on the decease of Tom o'r Nant's father, the lawyer seized upon the property which by law descended to Tom o'r Nant, and turned out his poor old mother upon the cold mountain's side.

Many strange adventures occurred to Tom in South Wales, but those which befell him whilst officiating as a turnpike-keeper were certainly the most extraordinary. If true (and who would presume to doubt Tom o' the Dingle's veracity ?), the office of turnpike-keeper in Wild Wales must require a person of considerable nerve to fill it.

"We were in the habit of seeing plenty of passengers going through the gate without paying. I mean such things as are called phantoms or illusions. Sometimes there were hearses and mourning-coaches, sometimes funeral processions on foot, to be seen as distinctly as anything could be seen, especially during night-time. I saw myself on a certain night a hearse go through the gate whilst it was shut. I saw the horses and the harness, the postillion lad and the coachman, and the tufts of hair such as are seen on the tops of hearses, and I saw the wheels scattering the stones in the road, just as other wheels would have done. Then I saw a burying of the same character

quite as like the real thing; there was the bier and the black drapery. I have seen more than one. If a young man was to be buried, there would be a white sheet or something that looked like one, and sometimes I have seen a flaring candle going past.

"Once a traveller passing through the gate called out to me. 'Look,' said he, 'yonder is a corpse-candle coming through the enclosures besides the highway.' So we paid attention to it as it moved, making apparently towards the church from the other side. Sometimes it would be quite near the road, another time some way into the fields. And sure enough, after the lapse of a little time a body was obliged to be brought by exactly the same route by which the candle had come, because the old road was blocked up by snow.

"Another time there happened a great wonder, connected with an old man of Carmarthen who was in the habit of carrying fish to Aberhonddu, Menni, and Monmouth, and returning with the poorer kind of Gloucester cheese. My people knew he was on the road and had made ready for him, the weather being dreadful, wind blowing and snow drifting. Well, in the middle of the night my daughters heard the voice of the old man at the gate, and their mother called to them to open it quick and to invite the old man to come in to the fire. One of the girls got up forthwith, but when she went out there was nobody to be seen. On the morrow, lo and behold! the body of the old man was brought past on a couch, he having perished in the snow on the mountain called Tre'r Castell. Now this is the truth of the matter."

Many wonderful feats did Tom perform connected with loading and carrying, which acquired for him the reputation of the best wood-carter of the south. His dexterity in moving huge bodies was probably

never surpassed. Robinson Crusoe was not half so handy. Only see how he moved a ship into the [water], which a whole multitude of people were unable to do.

"After keeping the gate for three years I took a lease in Llandeilo Fawr and built a house, which I got licensed as a tavern for my daughters to keep; I myself went on carrying wood as usual. Now it happened that the merchant at Abermarlais had built a small ship of about thirty or forty tons. He had built it in the wood about a mile and a quarter from the river Tywi, which was capable of floating small vessels as far as Carmarthen. However, it was made too heavy to be drawn to the river in the manner in which the man intended it should. He had resolved that the people should drag it there by way of sport, and had caused proclamation to be made in four parish churches that on such and such a day a ship would be launched at Abermarlais and that food and drink would be given to every one who should come to lend a hand in the work. So there were broached four hogsheads of our measure in Denbigh, but two of the southern measure, and a great ovenful of bread was baked, and plenty of cheese and butter bought and meat cooked, for the more respectable people. The ship was provided with four wheels, or rather four great rolling-stocks, fenced about with iron, with great big axle-trees in them, and well greased against the appointed day. I had been loading in the wood that day, and sending the team forward I stopped to see the business; and a pretty piece of business it turned out. All the food was eaten, all the drink drunken to the last drop, the ship drawn about three roods and then left in a deep ditch. By this time night was coming on, so the multitude went away, some drunk, some hungry

for want of food, but the greater part laughing as if they would split their sides. As for the merchant, he cried like a child, bitterly lamenting the act of folly which he had committed, and at length told me that he should have to take the ship to pieces before he could ever get it out of the ditch.

"I told him that I could take it to the river, if I could but get three or four men to help me, whereupon he said that if I could but get the vessel to the water, he would give me anything I asked. He earnestly begged me to come the next morning if possible. I did come with the lad and four horses. I went before the team and set the men to work to break a hole through a great old wall which was, as it were, before the ship. We then laid a piece of timber across the hole, from which was a chain to which the tackle, that is, the rope and pulleys were hooked. We then hooked one end of the rope to the ship and set the horses to pull at the other. So the ship came out of the ditch prosperously enough; and then we had to hook the tackle again to a tree which was growing near, and by this means we got the ship forward. But when we came to soft ground we were obliged to put planks under the wheels to prevent them sinking under the immense weight, and when we came to the end of the foremost planks we put the hinder ones before and so on, and when there was no tree at hand to which we could hook the tackle we were obliged to drive a post down to hook it to. So from tree to post it got down to the river in a few days. I was promised noble wages by the merchant, but I never got a farthing in the end but promises and praises. Some people came to look at us and gave us money to get ale, and that was all."

The timber-merchant turned out a very great

knave, cheating Tom on various occasions, and finally broke, very much in his debt. Tom was obliged to sell everything, and left South Wales without horses or waggon. His old friend the Muse, however, stood him in good stead.

"Before I left," says he, "I went to Aberhonddu and printed the interlude of 'The Four Principal Ones, namely, the King, the Justice, the Bishop, and the Husbandman,' and got a man to play it with me and help me to sell the books. I likewise busied myself in getting subscriptions to a book of songs called 'The Garden of Minstrelsy.' It was printed at Trefecca; the expenses attending the printing amounted to fifty-two pounds, but I was fortunate enough to dispose of two thousand copies. Subsequently I composed an interlude entitled 'Pleasure and Care,' and played it. After that I made an interlude about 'The Three Powerful Ones of the World, namely, Poverty, Love, and Death.'"

The poet's daughters were not successful in the tavern speculation at Llandeilo, and followed their father into North Wales. The second he apprenticed to a milliner, the other two lived with him till the day of his death. He settled at Denbigh in a small house, which he was enabled to furnish by means of two or three small sums which he recovered for work done a long time before. He then endeavoured to get a livelihood and succeeded tolerably well, turning his hand to various employments and occasionally going about playing interludes. Shortly after his return his father died, and the lawyer seized his little property for the old curse, turned Tom's mother out, and took possession. Tom, however, was speedily avenged.

"Shortly after this," he says, "the lawyer fell sick, whereupon I wrote to him a terrible letter.

I began by placing before his eyes some of the horrors of hell and concluded by saying that unless I got my land back again, my malison should gnaw him to all eternity. He was lying in a doleful condition in the chamber in which his bed was, crying out pitiably, and a dreadful smell proceeding from him, owing to some putrid matter which his body was discharging. So loathsome he was that the man who attended him was obliged to sprinkle vinegar throughout the room before he could approach him. Neither doctor nor maidservant would go near him at last; and there he lay screeching terribly and crying out to his son to hear him, and saying, 'O, Tom o'r Nant, land! Let him have it, let him, let him, Tom o'r Nant, land!' And so he died."

We have said that when he did not go about performing interludes he put his hand to many things. Shortly after his return to Denbigh he learnt the trade of stonemason, took jobs and kept workmen. He then went amongst certain bricklayers and induced them to teach him their craft, and shortly, as he says, became a very lion at bricklaying. "For the last four or five years," says he, towards the conclusion of his history, "my work has been to put up iron ovens and likewise furnaces of all kinds, also grates, stoves and boilers, and not infrequently I have practised as a smoke doctor."

The following feats of strength he performed after his return from South Wales, when he was probably about sixty years of age.

"About a year after my return from the south, I met with an old carrier of wood, who had many a time worked along with various others, and in the course of discourse my friend said to me, 'Tom, thou art much weaker than thou wast when we carried wood together.' I answered that it was my opinion

that I was not a bit weaker than I was then. Now it happened that at the moment we were talking, there were some sacks of wheat in the hall which were going to Caer by the carrier's waggon. They might hold about three bushels each, and I said that if I could get three of the sacks upon the table and had them tied together, I would carry them into the street and back again; and so I did, and every one else who was present there, who tried to do the same, failed. Another time when I was at Caer I lifted a barrel of porter from the street to the hinder part of the waggon solely by strength of back and arms." He was once run over by a loaded waggon, but strange to say, escaped without the slightest injury. Towards the close of his life he had strong religious convictions and felt a loathing for the sins which he had committed. "On their account," says he, in the concluding page of his biography, "there is strong necessity for me to consider my ways and to inquire about a Saviour, since it is utterly impossible for me to save myself without obtaining knowledge of the merits of the Mediator, in which I hope I shall terminate my short time on earth in the peace of God enduring to all eternity." He died in the year 1810, shortly after the death of his wife, who seems to have been a faithful, loving partner. By her side he was buried in the earth of the graveyard of the White Church of Denbigh. There can be little doubt that the souls of both will be accepted on the great day, when, as Gronwy Owen says *: "Like corn from the belly of the ploughed field, in a thick crop, those buried in the earth shall arise, and the sea shall cast forth a thousand myriads of dead above the deep billowy way."

* Blank in MS. The quotation has been supplied from "Wild Wales."—[Ed.]

Such was the life of Tom o' the Dingle, the most salient points of which appear to me to be his boyish device of making ink out of elderberries; his battle with the cruel fighter, the brother of the young girl, who wished to give Tom a thrashing, which he most richly merited; his teaching his horses to pull the rope of the crane by which he raised wood; and his getting the ship into the water.

CHAPTER XXXII

Tom of the Nant must be considered in two points of view, as a man and as a poet. As a man he must be considered likewise in two points of view, physically and morally. There must have been something very wonderful in his physical organisation, making it different from that of almost every other man who has existed up to the present time. Men's bones in general are not very difficult to break. Many a powerful young man has been lamed for [life] by the wheel of a light gig passing over his leg. But Tom's bones were not so easily broken. Once upon a time the fore and hind wheel of a waggon carrying nearly three tons' weight of wood passed over his thigh upon the bridge of Rhuddlan, yet, astonishing to say, he rose up and felt no pain, nor until the day of his death did he experience any ill consequences from the accident. He was considered the strongest man in Wales of his time, and besides the feats which have been given above in his own words, namely, the carrying the three sacks full of corn, and lifting the barrel of porter from the street into the waggon, he once carried for a considerable distance eight cubic feet of oaken timber upon his back. His blows were said to have been dreadful, even when he checked half his might; for, conscious of his power, he invariably in his "tussles" with carters and such-like gentry, only put in half-blows, which were always sufficient to humble his opponents,

rough and terrible customers as some of them were. A singular physical organisation his must certainly have been, one in which almost superhuman strength was united with an insensibility to pain.

He was doubtless a giant, some people will say, one like Perrin the pugilist, the opponent of Johnson, who would lift eight hundredweight of iron into a waggon and who was six foot four without his shoes. No, there are no giants in Wales, unless they come from Saxon lands. Yet was Tom tall for a genuine Welshman, towering about four inches above the generality of his countrymen. Nevertheless, he would hardly have been admitted into the Coldstream Guards, which takes men of lower stature than any other of the household regiments, had he offered to enlist as a private gentleman. Tom stood about five feet eight inches high, so though [he] might be reckoned a tall Welshman, he could certainly not be reckoned a son of Anak. But then he was doubtless made like Molineux, the opponent of Cribb, who, though little above five feet nine, was so broad and thick that his form was absolutely terrible to behold. No, Tom was neither broad nor thick. There never was a Welshman either broad or thick. Tom, as one has told the author who has seen him, was a spare man, of average breadth, but he seemed to be made of wire, hickory, and whipcord, and every movement of his figure betokened internal energy. Inwardly energetic he must certainly have been, for he seemed to hate rest, was seldom seen upon a chair, was never languid, and always employed upon something. The person whom Tom of the Dingle seems most to have resembled in physical organisation was a certain Charles Strong, a Lowland Scotch itinerant fiddler, who was in existence about twenty-five years ago. This individual, who was believed to be of caird

extraction, and who had no certain patronym, the name of Strong being bestowed upon him on account of his physical prowess, was not above the middle size, but was certainly the strongest and perhaps the most energetic man in Scotland, even at a surprising age. When upward of a hundred he would walk fifty miles a day with ease, and in his hundred-and-fourth year, at a festival at one of the Duke of Northumberland's castles, to which he had been brought by the Duke of Argyll, lifted from the ground on the palm of his hand a man weighing thirteen stone, until the foot of the individual whom he lifted in the air was nearly parallel with his shoulder. He likewise on the same occasion lifted a huge kitchen table with his teeth. With respect to his teeth the original . . .* remain all perfectly sound. They were coarse as rock, but yellow, and, like the gums in which they were inserted, horrible to see.

One of the strangest things connected with the physical Tom, perhaps, was that with bones uncrushable, strength equal to that of the strongest, he did not live to a great age. The body was born in the vale of Clwyd in the year 1739, and buried in the graveyard of the White Church of Denbigh in the year 1810. So the physical Tom was only seventy-one when he died. Now how was it that the wonderful body did not retain vitality to a hundred at least? Its not doing so is one of the most mysterious points connected with it. True it is that Tom in his biography hints that that body of his had been up to a thing or two which it ought not to have been up to. Indeed, he says explicitly that whilst working as a wood-carter and playing interludes, he had been in the habit of keeping company with *merched anladd*, which words, though some of Mr.

* MS. illegible.

Murray's writers, in general rather a reckless set, might render by wanton huzzies, the present writer, the only somewhat straight-laced one amongst them, prefers to render by loose-laced little ladies ; discourse with whom, as Tom of the Dingle observes, quoting the words of a certain wise man of old, doth weaken a body more than anything else. Nevertheless, the present writer cannot help thinking that any conversation which Thomas may have had with *merched anladd*, whilst carting or playing interludes, does not satisfactorily clear up why Tom, with such bones, sinews, and energy, should not have lived to at least a hundred. Charles Strong, who was perhaps not so strong as Tom o' the Dingle, lived longer by forty years than he of the Nant. But then Charles Strong was no doubt a water-drinker and a Presbyterian ! He certainly was a Presbyterian (and may much good have accrued to his constitution from his having been so !) and a water-drinker, that is, you would call him so if you were speaking Gaelic, whiskey in that language signifying water. Charles Strong was about as dissolute an old gentleman as any straight-laced person ever turned up the whites of his eyes against, more addicted to whiskey than ever Tom was to ale, and as fond of the conversation of *striopaichean* as Tom was of that of the Welsh equivalent of that plural, *merched anladd*. So why did Charles Strong live longer than Tom o'r Nant ? and why did not Tom o' the Dingle live as long as Charles Strong ? Tom was not killed by his irregularities, which, by the bye, were not persisted in when he was becoming elderly. Then, after all, what killed Tom ? Why, his early irregularities produced certain effects on Tom's constitution which . . . Nonsense ! Tom after he was sixty carried three sacks of corn on his back. So that won't do. The

effects of early irregularities indeed on a frame like Tom's! Why did not the effects of early irregularities prevent Donald Grant from attaining the age he did? Who was Donald Grant? Donald Grant was a Highlander who died towards the latter part of the last century in the alms-house of Great Yarmouth, aged one hundred and nine. And he had been dissipated, had he? Dissipated, indeed! Donald Grant had been a grenadier under Marlborough, had fought at Blenheim and Malplaquet, and been quartered in Flemish towns, and used to make the old, worn, weather-beaten, gallant Yarmouth fishermen crack their sides with laughter with the tales he told them of Flemish lasses, quite as loose ladies as the *merched anladd* of Tom o' the Dingle. Then what could have killed so soon that body of Tom o' the Dingle?

Shall the writer now tell the reader what perhaps killed Tom o' the Dingle, what he himself thinks may probably have killed him? Aye, aye. Well, then, he is of opinion that it was *hiraeth* that killed Tom o' the Dingle. What is *hiraeth?* *Hiraeth* is longing, the mourning, consuming feeling which one experiences for the loss of a beloved object; which an exile, who knows he shall never see his country again, experiences; which a faithful friend experiences, who has lost the object of his friendship; which the old mastiff experiences, when his master is laid in the grave, the old man when his dame is no more, the old dame who has lost her husband; the feeling which made the lady of . . .* Castle pursue her departed lord. "To heaven he went, she him pursued," says an old bard, who wrote a short elegy on the death of the governor of . . .† and his dame,

* Blank in MS.—[Ed.]
† Blank in MS.—[Ed.]

and who says that he himself was fading with longing on their account :

> " Longing for them doth fade my cheek,
> He was a man and she was meek,
> A lion was he, she full of glee,
> He handsome was, she fair to see ;
>
> " A wondrous concord here was view'd ;
> He was wise and she was good,
> He liberal was, she kind of mood,
> To heaven he went, she him pursued."

It is quite possible, nay more, probable, that Tom died of *hiraeth* for his faithful partner after she had been buried in the graveyard of the White Church. It is true Tom had been guilty of various irregularities and had, as he acknowledges, not always been faithful towards her. But his irregularities and infidelities had been committed in his heyday. Tom had lived to see the folly and wickedness of such things, and had become, not a Methodist, it is true, but a Christian ; and when he lost her who had been his partner for nearly fifty years, Tom felt *hiraeth* about her, pined, faded and died in spite of his strength, energy, and wonderful bones. He must have had a tender heart or he would not have given himself all that trouble about helping other carters to load their vehicles. He must have had a tender heart or he would not have entered into that bail for his uncle, which was eventually the cause of his ruin. So with that tender heart of his, is it not more probable that he died of *hiraeth* for the loss of the object which he must have loved more tenderly than any other thing on earth, than that with that wonderful constitution of his, that wonderful strength and those wonderful bones, he should have died from something which was not *hiraeth* nor connected with the feelings of the mind ? Most assuredly. It [does not] always happen that

the most pleasing solution of a difficult point is the most probable one; but such happily is the case here.

And now something about the mental part of Tom of the Dingle. A most singular mind had Tom o' the Dingle, quite, at least almost, as singular as his body, remarkably, however, resembling that body in its strength, sturdiness, and power of rebounding. The waggon with three tons of wood upon it ran over Tom's body; yet did that body get up without any help save its own internal energy, without experiencing any damage. The heavy waggon of misfortune ran over Tom, pressing down on the hard ground and amid the flinty stones, but it could not crush his mind. His mind was too sturdy, too elastic to be crushed. Up it got from behind the waggon-wheels, carolling like a lark, and was as hale and sturdy as before the accident. Yes, the mind was wonderfully similar to the body. Perhaps no frame save Tom's after being run over by a ponderous waggon ever got up without help, perhaps no other human mind after undergoing the same weight of calamity which Tom's underwent ever sprang up without help, buoyant, elastic, and as good a mind as ever. As Tom's body required no help in battles and tumbles, so did Tom's mind require no help in misfortune and disaster. It is probable that a more independent mind never existed. When broke, done up, his waggon gone, his horses sold, what does Tom do? Ask anybody to help him? Not he. Tom is too independent. He writes an interlude, plays it, and gets money and prints a book of interludes and songs, selling two thousand copies; and in the latter days of his life, when interludes, owing to Methodism, are getting rather out of fashion, does he ask Sir Charles of the South, or Sir Watkin of the North, or the Bulkley of Anglesea, to get a pension for the Shakespear of

Wales, on which he could retire and drink his ale and smoke his weed in dignity and idleness ? Not he, indeed ! Tom's mind was too proud to allow him to do any such thing. " Turn to cutting stone, Tom," said his mind, " or get those brickmakers of . . ., who are great admirers of your genius, to teach you how to make bricks, or practise as a smoke doctor. You have often cured your own chimney when it smoked, so why not cure other people's smoky chimneys, and gain an independent livelihood by so doing ? Your work you know is as good as their mother." And Tom by turns is stonemason, brick-maker, and smoke doctor, but always an independent man. O, how different from other people's was Tom's body, and O, how different was Tom's mind from that of most other people, with its sturdiness and love of independence, especially from those of poets, whose Elysium in general is to rhyme, live in laziness, and be supported out of other people's purses ! How different was Tom's determination never to receive bread from anybody until he had earned [it] for some specific work done, to the general indifference of poets as to whether they have earned or not the money which they receive, provided they do receive it ! How different was Tom's behaviour on this point to that of the Welsh bards in general, always looking for a gift and dearly loving the bread of idleness ! How different from that of that beautiful poet Gronwy Owen, who could not live without help, and who with his family would have died of starvation in London, had not Lewis Morris got him that same situation in Virginia ! How wonderfully different was Tom's mind from the minds of poets in general ! We almost wonder how he could ever have been a poet with that manly, stuggy, independent spirit of his. Let us try to explain the mystery !

Why did Tom with that wonderful body of his die at only seventy-one? How did Tom with that sturdy, stuggy, independent mind of his become a poet? We have said that it was probably *hiraeth* that caused Tom to die at only seventy-one, *hiraeth* for his poor wife who had helped to turn the [crane] for him in the wood when she was big with her first bairn, and who had been his faithful partner for fifty years; of which *hiraeth* Tom would never have died, had he not had a tender heart. Now may not that same tender heart, which made Tom die of *hiraeth*, have made or helped, by exerting a certain influence over a wonderful mind, to make Tom a poet? If it did not, we really can only wonder how with that sturdy, stuggy, independent spirit of his he ever became a poet. Aye, and let us add with that strong body of his, those wonderful bones and that pluck, that physical courage, that capability of teaching horses to pull properly at pulleys and windlasses; for setting independent spirit and all that aside, where was there ever a poet before who had strength, courage, was able to ride or drive, or had gumption enough to teach a horse to turn a windlass? What says Horace, who ought to know something about poets?

> "Quem tu, Melpomene, semel
> Nascentem placido lumine videris,
> Illum non labor Isthmius
> Clarabit pugilem: non equus impiger
> Curru ducet Achaico
> Victorem. . . ."

We will now consider Thomas as a poet. That he was a poet is proved by the estimation in which he is held as one amongst his countrymen. There is a print very easy to meet in Wales, in which he is represented with a pen in his hand at a table;

a lattice cottage-window is behind him on his left hand, a shelf with plates and trenchers behind him on his right; his features are rude but full of wild, strange expression. Below is the following couplet:

> "Llun Gwr yw, llawn gwir Awen
> Y Byd a lanwodd o'i Ben,"

that is, "The figure of the man who was filled with the true Muse and who filled the whole world from his head," which words perhaps might as well have been left, for they are not very clear. The man at the cottage table is intended to represent Tom o' the Dingle, though his name is not given. Tom o' the Dingle, however, certainly did not fill the whole world from his head. Shakespear did, it is true, at any rate England and Germany, who of late years have taken it into their heads to declare themselves the world, but the figure of the man at the table is not that of Shakespear. The print has for title, "The Cambrian Shakespear." So the lines perhaps mean that Tom o' the Dingle did for Wales what Shakespear did for the world; or they may mean that the spirit of Shakespear got by transmigration into Tom's body, or they may mean something else. But whatever the lines may mean, the portrait and the title show that the Welsh, or some of them, consider Tom a very great man, worthy to be called their Shakespear.

Yes, many of the Welsh consider Tom their Shakespear, so he must have been something particular as a poet. As a further corroboration that they do so, see a singular passage in one of Southey's letters to William Taylor. Southey, it will be as well to observe, had always a hankering after Welsh matters, and was always corresponding with and picking up curious information from the

scholars of Wales. The following is the passage alluded to * : "You remember your heretical proposition *de Cambro-Britannis*—that the Principality had never produced, and never could produce, a great man ; that I opposed Owen Glendower and Sir Henry Morgan to the assertion in vain. But I have found the great man, and not merely the great man, but *the maximus homo*, the μέγιστος ἄνθρωπος, the μεγιστότατος—we must create a super-superlative to reach the idea of his magnitude. I found him in the Strand, in a shop-window, laudably therein exhibited by a Cambro-Briton ; the engraver represents him sitting in a room, that seems to be a cottage, or at best a farm, pen in hand, eyes uplifted, and underneath is inscribed :

" ' The Cambrian Shakespear.'

But, woe is me for my ignorance ! the motto that followed surpassed my skill in language, though it doubtless was a delectable morsel from that great Welshman's poems. You must, however, allow the justice of the name for him, for all his writings are in Welsh ; and the Welshmen say that he is as great a man as Shakespear, and they must know, because they can understand him. I inquired what might be the trivial name of this light and lustre of our dark age, but it hath escaped me ; but that it meant, being interpreted, either Thomas Denbigh, or some such every-day baptismal denomination."

Tom, it is true, is not mentioned by name in the above passage, yet a Welsh Shakespear is spoken of, by which Tom, and Tom alone, can be meant.

* Blank in MS. There does not appear to be any such passage in the published letters of Southey to Wm. Taylor. The quotation here given is taken from a letter by Southey to Rickman ("Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey," Vol. II, pp. 176–177).—[Ed.]

CHAPTER XXXIII

We are not going to give an analysis of all his works, which indeed we have no opportunity of doing, only one of them being in our possession. Of this, however, we will give the best account we can. His countrymen in general consider his interlude of "Pleasure and Care" * as his best piece. This, however, we have not before us. The one in our possession is the one about "Riches and Poverty." The entire title of the interlude is to this effect:

The two prime opponents, Riches and Poverty. A brief exposition of their contrary effects in this world, with short and appropriate explanations of their quality and substance, according to the rule of the four elements, Water, Fire, Earth, and Air. First of all enter Fool, Sir Jemant Wamal, who in rather a foolish speech tells the audience that they are about to hear a piece composed by Tom the Poet. Then appears Captain Riches, who makes a long speech about his influence in the world and the general contempt in which poverty is held. He is, however, presently checked by the fool, who tells him some home truths and asks him, among other questions, whether Solomon did not say that it is not meet to treat with disrespect and contumely a poor man who conducts himself rationally. Then appears Howel Tightbelly, the Miser, who in capital verse, with very considerable glee and exultation, gives an account of his manifold rascalities. Then comes his

* MS. "Ease."

wife, Esther Steady, home from the market, between whom and her husband there is a pithy dialogue. Captain Riches and Captain Poverty then meet, without rancour, however, and have a long discourse about the providence of God, whose agents they own themselves to be. Enter then an old worthless scoundrel called Diogyn Trwstan or Lazy Luckless, who is upon the parish, and who in a very entertaining account of his life confesses that he was never good for anything, but a liar and an idler from his infancy. Enter again the Miser along with poor Lowry, who asks the Miser for meal and other articles, but gets nothing but threatening language. There is then a very edifying dialogue between Mr. Contemplation and Mr. Truth, who, when they retire, are succeeded on the stage by the Miser and John the Tavern-keeper. The Publican owes the Miser money, and begs that he will be merciful to him. The Miser, however, swears that he will be satisfied with nothing but bond and judgment on his effects. The Publican very humbly says that he will go to a friend of his in order to get the bond made out. Almost instantly comes the Fool, who reads an inventory of the Publican's effects. The Miser then sings with very gladness because everything in the world has hitherto gone well with him. Turning round, however, what is his horror and astonishment to behold Mr. Death close by him. Death hauls the Miser away, and then appears the Fool to moralise and dismiss the audience.

The appropriate explanations mentioned in the title are given in various songs which the various characters sing, after describing themselves or after dialogues with each other. The announcement that the whole exposition, etc., will be after the rule of the four elements is rather startling. The dialogue,

however, between Captain Riches and Captain Poverty shows that Tom was equal to his subject and promised nothing that he could not perform * :

Enter CAPTAIN POVERTY

" O Riches, thy figure is charming and bright,
And to speak in thy praise all the world doth delight,
But I'm a poor fellow all tatter'd and torn,
Whom all the world treateth with insult and scorn.

RICHES

" However mistaken the judgment may be
Of the world which is never from ignorance free,
The parts we must play, which to us are assign'd,
According as God has enlighten'd our mind.

" Of elements four did our Master create
The earth and all in it with skill the most great ;
Need I the world's four materials declare—
Are they not water, fire, earth, and air ?

" Too wise was the mighty Creator to frame
A world from one element, water or flame ;
The one is full moist and the other full hot,
And a world made of either were useless, I wot.

" And if it had all of mere earth been compos'd
And no water nor fire been within it enclos'd,
It could ne'er have produc'd for a huge multitude
Of all kinds of living things suitable food.

" And if God what was wanted had not fully known,
But created the world of these three things alone,
How would any creature the heaven beneath,
Without the blest air have been able to breathe ?

" Thus all things created the God of all grace,
Of four prime materials, each good in its place.
The work of His hands, when completed, He view'd,
And saw and pronounc'd that 'twas seemly and good.

* A blank is left in the MS. The quotation has been supplied from " Wild Wales."—[ED.]

POVERTY

" In the marvellous things, which to me thou hast told,
The wisdom of God I most clearly behold,
And did He not also make man of the same
Materials He us'd when the world He did frame ?

RICHES

" Creation is all, as the sages agree,
Of the elements four in man's body that be ;
Water's the blood, and fire is the nature
Which prompts generation in every creature.

" The earth is the flesh which with beauty is rife,
The air is the breath, without which is no life :
So man must be always accounted the same
As the substances four which exist in his frame.

" And as in their creation distinction there's none
'Twixt man and the world, so the Infinite One
Unto man a clear wisdom did bounteously give
The nature of everything to perceive.

POVERTY

" But one thing to me passing strange doth appear :
Since the wisdom of man is so bright and so clear,
How comes there such jarring and warring to be
In the world betwixt Riches and Poverty ?

RICHES

" That point we'll discuss without passion or fear
With the aim of instructing the listeners here ;
And haply some few who instruction require
May profit derive like the bee from the briar.

" Man, as thou knowest, in his generation
Is a type of the world and of all the creation ;
Difference there's none in the manner of birth
'Twixt the lowliest hinds and the lords of the earth.

" The world which the same thing as man we account
In one place is sea, in another is mount ;
A part of it rock, and a part of it dale—
God's wisdom has made every place to avail.

" There exist precious treasures of every kind
Profoundly in earth's quiet bosom enshrin'd ;
There's searching about them, and ever has been,
And by some they are found, and by some never seen.

" With wonderful wisdom the Lord God on high
Has contriv'd the two lights which exist in the sky :
The sun's hot as fire, and its ray bright as gold,
But the moon's ever pale, and by nature is cold.

" The sun, which resembles a huge world of fire,
Would burn up full quickly creation entire,
Save the moon with its temp'rament cool did assuage
Of its brighter companion the fury and rage.

" Now I beg you the sun and the moon to behold,
The one that's so bright, and the other so cold,
And say if two things in creation there be
Better emblems of Riches and Poverty.

Poverty

" In manner most brief, yet convincing and clear,
You have told the whole truth to my wond'ring ear,
And I see that 'twas God, who in all things is fair,
Has assign'd us the forms, in this world which we bear.

" In the sight of the world doth the wealthy man seem
Like the sun which doth warm everything with its beam ;
Whilst the poor needy wight with his pitiable case
Resembles the moon which doth chill with its face.

Riches

" You know that full oft, in their course as they run,
An eclipse cometh over the moon or the sun ;
Certain hills of the earth with their summits of pride
The face of the one from the other do hide.

" The sun doth uplift his magnificent head,
And illumines the moon, which were otherwise dead,
Even as Wealth from its station on high
Giveth work and provision to Poverty.

POVERTY

" I know, and the thought mighty sorrow instils,
The sins of the world are the terrible hills
An eclipse which do cause, or a dread obscuration,
To one or another in every vocation.

RICHES

" It is true that God gives unto each from his birth
Some task to perform whilst he wends upon earth,
But He gives correspondent wisdom and force
To the weight of the task, and the length of the course.
[*Exit.*

POVERTY

" I hope there are some, who 'twixt me and the youth
Have heard this discourse, whose sole aim is the truth,
Will see and acknowledge, as homeward they plod,
Each thing is arrang'd by the wisdom of God."

Tom must have been a poet, and a great one, or he certainly could not have written an interlude like the above, in which the hackneyed subject of Riches and Poverty is handled in a manner so original and at the same time so masterly. Yet his genius was widely different from that of Shakespear. He deals principally in allegories and personifications of virtues and vices, Shakespear in historical facts and historical characters ; Tom with the world of shadows, Shakespear with the real. And here at first sight it seems very surprising that with that practical mind of his he should not have been more of a practical poet, that he should not have invented stories or chosen stories for dramas and interludes, and then have handled them practically after the manner of Shakespear, without allegories and personifications. But every artificer must work with the materials in his reach, and to a certain extent be guided by circumstances. The most wonderful edifices in Rome were built of much the same material and somewhat in the

same style as other superior buildings which existed before them. Michael Angelo built from the material around him and according to the ideas which he had imbibed from looking around him. He excelled all previous architects of his country, it is true, but would he have done so had he not seen their works ? The wonderful dramas of Shakespear are built of much the same materials and after much the same fashion as many which he had been in the habit of reading and seeing, before he began to write himself. Shakespear excelled all other English dramatists, but would he ever have been heard of, had he not imitated others who went before him ? He placed himself at the head of a school, but he did not create that school. Now to expect that Tom o' the Dingle should write like Shakespear or the dramatists before Shakespear would be absurd, for Tom knew nothing about them. He did not know very much English and had probably never seen an English play in his life. So who in reason could expect that he should become a first-rate writer of drama in the English fashion, even supposing he wrote in Welsh ? But Tom did all that it was possible to do under his circumstances. He knew what interludes were, he was ambitious to become an interlude writer, [he] imitated the productions of his predecessors and eventually did become the best of all interlude writers, the crown and glory of them. He is as much superior to other interlude writers as Michael Angelo to other architects of Italy, Shakespear to other dramatists of England. No great praise to Tom after all to say that he was superior to other interlude writers ! Stop, sneerer, what do you know about interlude writing ? The interlude writers were the same description of people as those who wrote miracle plays, in fact, they were the writers of Welsh miracle

plays. Now as the poetry of the bards was at least equal to the lyrical productions of any contemporaneous set of poets in Europe, so were the Welsh interludes at least equal to the best of the miracle plays of any other part of Europe. So is it no slight glory to a man to be at the head of Welsh interlude writers? Perhaps it would scarcely be going too far to say that Tom may be placed at the head of all writers of miracle plays, notwithstanding Calderon stands amongst their number, for the best of Calderon's *autos* are at most equal to Tom's "Riches and Poverty," which, the writer has been informed by people who knew what they were talking about, is by no means the best of Tom's compositions.

When the Welsh called Tom of the Dingle the Welsh Shakespear, they acted according to their lights. There is a wide difference between interludes and plays, but both were dramatic representations, both performed on stages, and therefore they mixed up the greatest of their interlude writers with the first of English dramatists. It would have been far more right to have called him the Welsh Calderon, but of him they had probably no acquaintance. The Welsh Calderon, with some limitation, Thomas Edwards might certainly be called. We say with some limitation, because, though Calderon is the greatest writer of *autos sacramentati*, that is, miracle plays, that Spain, a land renowned for such compositions, has ever produced, he is likewise at the head of dramatists in a land renowned for the drama. But the Welshman may certainly be placed on an equality with, or perhaps rather above, the Castilian, as a writer of miracle plays.

What strange contrasts there are in the lives of these two men, with one or two singular analogies! First of all for the contrasts. Calderon first saw light

at Burgos of Castile, Tom in the heart of Denbighshire. Calderon was born of a noble, Tom of a cottager. Calderon was highly educated at the Queen of universities, Tom taught himself in the dingle and made his own ink out of elderberries. Calderon started on top as a glittering captain, Tom a rugged carter. Subsequently Calderon turned courtier, Tom brick-maker. Calderon was supple, Tom stuggy. So much for contrast; now for the points of resemblance. Both were great writers of miracle plays. Both got up dramatic exhibitions, Calderon for Philip the Fourth and his court, Tom for the coal-miners of Rhywabon; and O, the singular analogy in their position at the time when they respectively bade the world good-bye;—Calderon was a mystic priest, Tom a smoke doctor.

Does it not seem rather hard that one person should be born with every adventitious advantage and another person with none? What would not Tom have been, had he enjoyed Calderon's adventitious advantages? It is difficult to say. However, it is possible that Tom would not have been half so great a man as he was. Some people's energies and abilities can only be evolved by difficulties and privations. Robinson Crusoe made a great many wonderful things, but had he not been spurred on by necessity, he would have hardly given himself the trouble even to try to make the wonderful things which he did. Perhaps had Tom possessed the usual helps towards acquiring reading and writing, he never would have learnt to read and write at all, would have been a mere rugged, illiterate carter or perhaps something far lower, a worthless drunken Diogyn Trwstan, a clumsy lazy-bones on the parish. So perhaps after all Providence is wise.

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